Chronicles

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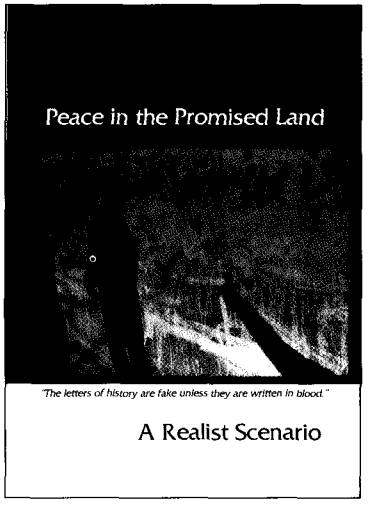
The purpose of this book is to rekindle debate in the United States about the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. . . . It is not normal that the discourse on the dispute is far more dynamic, varied, and intelligent in other countries—including Israel—than in America.

—From the Foreword

Peace in the Promised Land: A Realist Scenario

edited by Srdja Trifkovic

featuring chapters by Middle Eastern experts, *Chronicles* editors, and scholars Thomas Fleming, Michael Stenton, Leon Hadar, Srdja Trifkovic, Aaron D. Wolf, Paul Gottfried, Wayne Allensworth, David A. Hartman, Doug Bandow, Stephen B. Presser, and Ivan Eland, as well as color maps, source documents, and a selected bibliography



Few issues in American foreign policy evoke more emotion than U.S support for Israel. With the death of Yasser Arafat and a new centrist coalition in Israel, however, it is time to reconsider the question, "What is the American interest in this conflict?"

Peace in the Promised Land is essential reading for anyone who wants to move beyond sound bites and policy proposals to understand the roots of the conflict—and the role that the United States can play in its resolution.

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POLEMICS & EXCHANGES

On Webb and War

While I share some of the concerns expressed by Leon Hadar in his February *View* ("It's the War, Stupid!"), his analysis of the 2006 election is short on facts, as when he says that Virginia Sen. James Webb's victory over former Sen. George Allen could only be explained by Webb's success in "accentuating a consistent and very aggressive antiwar agenda."

Webb won for many reasons, including the increasing dominance of affluent liberals in Washington, D.C.'s fast-growing Northern Virginia suburbs, whose votes have elected two consecutive Democratic governors during campaigns that had nothing to do with issues of war and peace.

Having discussed the 2006 campaign with many Virginia conservatives, I can say that most agree that the Allen campaign was badly mismanaged. In particular, after the much-publicized "macaca" incident, Allen's handlers sent him out to grovel apologetically, a move that alienated many of the state's conservative voters while placating none of Allen's enemies.

Webb, by contrast, never apologized for anything, nor was he expected to do so. During a campaign in which Allen was repeatedly vilified as a "neo-Confederate," no one in the major media nor any liberal activist group ever called attention to Webb's 1990 speech at the Confederate Memorial in Arlington. Webb certainly never discouraged such attacks on Allen.

If there is one thing I've learned since coming to the nation's capital nearly ten years ago, it is this: In Washington, never attribute to ideology that which can be adequately explained by ambition.

Webb, a conservative Republican, became a Democrat because he wanted to be a senator and the GOP offered no avenue for his ambition. Liberal Democrats supported Webb because they thought he could fulfill their ambition to defeat Allen. And, it could be argued, Allen lost his Senate seat because of his ambition to be president. The consequences of all this surely will be interesting to watch, although I am by no means sure that *Chronicles* readers will be pleased with the consequences.

—*Robert Stacy McCain*
Washington, D.C.

Dr. Hadar Replies:

I thank Mr. McCain for his thoughtful response to my article. I agree with him that "Webb won for many reasons," as all political candidates do. And the same logic applies to Allen's loss. But the fact that Webb succeeded in forming a coalition that included liberals and conservatives, Democrats, Republicans, and independents, and that he won by such a small margin, suggests to me that what tipped the balance in the vote was the issue of the war. Webb made the war the central issue of his campaign, which was clear to anyone who followed the race. Hence, the notion that "Webb, a conservative Republican, became a Democrat because he wanted to be a senator and the GOP offered no avenue for his ambition" doesn't make much sense to me. How could Webb even consider running on a Republican platform that supports President Bush and his war in Iraq? In any case, I'm sure that many *Chronicles*' readers (and editors) who have been opposed to the war and also share Webb's populist positions on trade are delighted by the results.

On the Ugly

After reading Roger D. McGrath's review of Clint Eastwood's movie on the Battle of Iwo Jima ("The Good, The Bad, the Ugly," *Vital Signs*, January) and his article on Eastwood's *Letters From Iwo Jima* (*Sins of Omission*, February), I decided to see who was right—Eastwood or McGrath.

Although I was at Iwo from start to finish, I completely failed to relate to *Flags of Our Fathers*. It was, as McGrath describes, more about "Ira Hayes and the War Bond Drive" than about the battle of Iwo Jima. Perhaps that was Eastwood's intention.

McGrath was right: *Flags* does not properly introduce Iwo. It could have been about any of the many World War II Pacific battles. Iwo was the hottest, bloodiest battle in recorded history—a fact that someone should have explained to Eastwood before he attempted to direct such an epic.

Last night, I saw *Letters From Iwo Ji-*

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ma, and I was appalled. Ol' Clint actually made the Jap general Kuribayashi the star of his movie. Kuribayashi was no hero; he was a bloodthirsty tyrant who sacrificed his 20,000-plus army because of his uncontrollable stubbornness and his phony devotion to the even more bloodthirsty Emperor Hirohito. After the first two-and-a-half or three days, Kuribayashi had to have realized it was just a matter of time: The Marines were in and well advanced. Yet he allowed his soldiers to continue being slaughtered. What a hero! Eastwood can have him.

As for the scene in which Eastwood has a Marine shooting two Japanese prisoners, I don't believe it. Eastwood was dreaming to depict Americans committing such atrocities. It was the other way around: The Japs were the ones committing the atrocities.

McGrath wins the debate, hands down. Clint Eastwood should stick to his spaghetti Westerns—he had that darling snarl and quivering lips down pat—and leave depictions of World War II Marine battles to someone who doesn't have such a lopsided agenda.

—Ralph Walker-Willis
Arroyo Grande, CA

On Strippers

I concur with William J. Quirk in his discussion of the jurisdiction of federal courts (*Cultural Revolutions*, January). However, he missed a related strategic point.

In truth, the judiciary is no "final arbiter" of what the Constitution means. If it were, one branch of government would be supreme rather than coequal. So-called judicial supremacy is simply a myth invented by the Supreme Court in 1958 in *Cooper* v. *Aaron*.

The president needn't bother with getting Congress to add a "stripper" clause to legislation that would limit the Court's jurisdiction. He could simply say, in any given instance, "As head of a coequal branch of government, I assert executive authority to interpret the Constitution. In this case, we find no such right or authority as defined by this Court to be in the Constitution and therefore declare this Supreme Court decision null and void. We will not enforce it. We will ignore it. The Court be damned."

The judiciary has no enforcement mechanism of its own other than the willingness of the other branches of government to defer to judicial authority. They would be powerless to do anything. There is no need to "strip" what you can simply disregard.

"That would lead to chaos!" critics say. I reply, "Any worse than the chaos created by the courts?" Or, better still, "Very well. Let the president declare executive supremacy, and the Court can defer to him. Or let the Congress. Why let only the judiciary claim the privilege to be supreme?" Jefferson himself called this stalemate feature "a necessary imperfection."

I send no money to the pro-life movement, because it perpetuates this false notion of supremacy of one branch of government. The truth is, the president or Congress could end (or largely curtail) abortion tomorrow if they were serious about it (which they aren't). Bush and the Republicans are complete phonies on this issue. Their pro-life supporters assist them in perpetrating a fraud.

For a fuller discussion of this point, see *Mustard Seeds* by the late L. Brent Bozell II (Christendom Press, 2004).

—Frank J. Schmidt
Sacramento, CA

Professor Quirk Replies:

Mr. Schmidt writes that "there is no need to 'strip' what you can simply disregard." There is no question that Thomas Jefferson was right—and acted legally—when he released the writers and publishers imprisoned under the Alien and Sedition Acts even though the federal courts found the acts constitutional. Similarly, most think that Lincoln was right to disregard *Dred Scott*. More recently, if Mitt Romney, as governor of Massachusetts, had disregarded the Massachusetts Supreme Court on "gay marriage," the country would probably be better off.

The power to disregard has to be used rarely, however, or we would be swapping judicial supremacy for executive supremacy. Congress is the first branch of our government, established in Article I of the Constitution. As Madison wrote, "in republican government, the legislative authority necessarily predominates" (*Federalist* 51). If Congress wants the troops out of Iraq, they are out. But sometimes, as with Iraq, Congress prefers not to exercise its powers. Sometimes, it pretends it doesn't have them. Article III of the Constitution provides for Congress to define the jurisdiction of the Supreme Court—that is, what cases the Court may hear. If Congress chooses, the Supreme Court can be limited to cases involving ambassadors and those between states.

The problem is that the people don't know how limited the Court's power really is. They have been misled by academics, judges, and politicians who tell them the Court has the last word on interpreting the Constitution. It's not true: Each branch, as Mr. Schmidt writes, has an independent duty. Congress, since abortion appeared on the radar in the early 70's, has been happy to let the Court decide the hot-button cultural issues that will get an elected representative in trouble with a lot of his constituents no matter which way he votes. We just need to educate the people so that they will make their congressmen decide what issues should be removed—"stripped"—from the Court's docket to be handled at the state level, and what can be left to the Court to set a national rule. We have to have a little faith in democracy.

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by Stephen B. Presser

The Guantanamo Question

Who should determine whether alien enemy combatants captured in Iraq and Afghanistan are properly in the custody of the U.S. government at the U.S. Naval Station at Guantanamo Bay? The President and Congress have set up special military tribunals to make such determinations, but some federal judges and some critics of President George W. Bush believe that the President's and the military's actions in this regard must be subject to review by any of the federal courts. In Article I, Section 9, of the Constitution, a famous provision provides that "The Privilege of the Writ of Habeas Corpus shall not be suspended, unless when in Cases of Rebellion or Invasion the public Safety may require it."

The writ of *habeas corpus* is a centuries-old device from English and American law that guarantees citizens a proceeding to determine if they are being illegally incarcerated by their government. It is not clear, however, whether constitutional protections ought to be extended to alien enemy combatants. It would be reasonable to believe that constitutional guarantees are only for the people of the United States, who purportedly framed and ratified the document, as its first three words suggest.

Nevertheless, in recent decades, the Supreme Court has, more or less, vaguely suggested that *habeas corpus* and other constitutional rights ought to be considered as basic human rights and that any humans who find themselves in the grips of our government should be able to invoke them. There are some treaties to which the United States is a signatory that make similar suggestions, although, generally, these have not been held to apply to terrorists or other aliens who are not members of the official armed forces of other countries.

In 2004, in the case of *Rasul* v. *Bush*, the Supreme Court ruled that alien combatants detained at Guantanamo, which is territory leased from the sovereign state of Cuba, could bring *habeas corpus* provisions, which would have allowed the federal courts located anywhere in the country generally to second-guess the military authorities with regard to what should be done with the purported terrorists. As might have been expected, many detainees secured the services of American lawyers and sued in *habeas corpus* actions for their freedom. Then, in the Detainee Treatment Act (DTA) of 2005, Congress passed a statute providing that no *habeas corpus* actions were available to any "alien detained by the Department of Defense at Guantanamo Bay." By a conservative reading of the statute and the Constitution, this should have been the end of the matter, but, in *Hamdan* v. *Rumsfeld* (2006), the Supreme Court held that the DTA could not be applied to the hundreds of actions that were pending at the time the DTA was passed. The dissenters in *Hamdan* pointed out that the congressional intent to cover pending cases was clear, but the majority of the Court seemed determined to supervise the Bush administration's detainee policy. Continuing the dance, in 2006, Congress passed the Military Commissions Act (MCA), which employed an Article III, Section 10 "stripper" to make it absolutely explicit that no *habeas corpus* actions were to be available for either pending or future cases. Detainees could still, because of another federal statute, challenge the determinations by the military commissions, but this could only be done in the District of Columbia Court of Appeals, which had proved overall to be sympathetic to the Bush administration on these issues.

Lawyers for some of the detainees immediately filed an action claiming that the MCA violated "the Constitution, treaties, statutes, regulations, the common law, and the law of nations." Space does not permit a treatment of each of these claims, but they were all rejected, in a marvelously sensible opinion issued by two judges of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit. Turning to previous cases (the common law), the court observed that no case had ever explicitly held that the writ of *habeas corpus* could be brought on behalf of aliens held in territory that was not part of the country.

"[T]he Constitution," observed the court, "does not confer rights on aliens without property or presence within the United States." Rejecting this view, the one dissenting judge in the case held that Congress had no power to strip *habeas corpus* jurisdiction from the federal courts for these detainees, since there was, at the time of seeking the writ, no "Rebellion or Invasion." Unfortunately, the majority's stunningly sensible decision will probably not be the end of the matter, as petitions are currently being filed to get the U.S. Supreme Court to overrule the D.C. Circuit. These days, no one can predict what the Supreme Court will do, but, since the addition of Chief Justice John Roberts and Associate Justice Samuel Alito to the Court, and since the departure of the more liberal Sandra Day O'Connor, it seems more likely that the Court will hold that the *habeas* writ does not run (as the lawyers say) to Guantanamo. This will hardly be a defeat for the Constitution and the rule of law, since the District of Columbia Circuit will still be able to review the decisions of the military commissions at Guantanamo. It will, however, be a modest victory for the powers of Congress and the executive branch, and a modest reduction in the amount of overweening activism practiced by the federal courts. ◁C

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COALITION OF THE UNWILLING?

Recently, I attended a conference in Washington, D.C., that focused on the dilemmas involved in the expansion of NATO. One of the American speakers, referring to the membership of the small Baltic nation of Estonia in the U.S.-led security organization, expressed concern that the Estonians could force the Americans into a military confrontation with the Russians by igniting tensions between Tallinn and Moscow over some minor territorial dispute. The statement provoked an angry response from an Estonian diplomat: "Estonia, as a close ally of the United States, has committed its military forces to fight on the side of the Americans in Iraq," he argued. "We are a trusted member of the Coalition of the Willing in Iraq. We rushed to lend you a hand when you needed it, and we expect you to come to our help when we face a similar threat."

Why does this Estonian expect the Americans to nuke the Russians (if needed)? Well, the Estonians do have 35 troops in Iraq, which is more than what some other members of the "coalition" currently have in Mesopotamia—*e.g.*, the Netherlands (15), Slovenia (4), and Iceland (2). And, in fact, two Estonian soldiers were killed in Iraq. I get it now.

There is something pathetic in the notion, promoted by the Bush administration, that the United States, with more than 140,000 troops in Iraq, is leading a "coalition" or an "alliance" or a "multinational force" there, when the largest military contingency of non-Americans in that country is from Britain, with 7,100.

Then, just as the White House launched the "Surge," increasing the number of American troops in Iraq by more than 20,000, we learned that the Brits are planning to withdraw more than 2,000 of their troops by the end of the year. The announcement by outgoing British Prime Minister Tony Blair came just a few days after John Howard, the prime minister of Australia, another leading member of the "coalition"—550 troops, down from 2,000—exhibited a remarkable level of political *chutzpah* when he warned Americans not to elect a presidential candidate who was calling for the gradual withdrawal of U.S. forces from Iraq. And Denmark's 460 troops under British command are scheduled to return home by August.

In response, one member of the Bush administration's unruly spin machine told the *Washington Post* that the British announcement is—get this!—"a basically good-news story," while U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice stressed that the planned British withdrawal is "consistent" with the U.S. strategy for victory in Iraq. It's just what the doctor in Washington prescribed!

Vice President Dick Cheney went even further in employing the necons' another-turning-point-on-the-road-to-victory rhetoric. In an interview with ABC News during his February visit to Tokyo, Cheney called the planned British withdrawal from Shiite-dominated southern Iraq "an affirmation that there are parts of Iraq where things are going pretty well." Which, of course, explains why President Bush decided to deploy more U.S. troops to Iraq after telling the American people that things in Iraq are *not* going pretty well, or well at all.

On the same day, and on the same front page reporting the "basically good-news story" about the British withdrawal, the *New York Times* published an account of the cascading effect that the "Surge" is putting on the U.S. Armed Forces—in particular, the Army and the Reserves. The *Times* reported that the Pentagon is responding to the demands of President Bush's buildup by planning to send more than 14,000 National Guard troops back to Iraq next year, shortening their time between deployments.

Considering the overstretching of the U.S. military as a result of the war in Iraq (and Afghanistan), it seems quite astounding that Great Britain—and Australia, and Denmark, and the Netherlands, and Slovenia, not to mention Estonia—are not deploying more troops to Iraq to help their American ally stand up against a threat that the Bush administration has compared to Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union. Indeed, when Great Britain, under the leadership of Winston Churchill, was standing up against Nazi Germany in a lonely battle that could have determined the fate of the civilized world, her allies, led by the United States, provided her with huge military and economic aid—and, eventually, with hundreds of thousands of troops that helped the Allies win World War II. Even the small Polish exile government in London was instrumental in mobilizing critical scientific and intelligence aid to the Brits. This is what allies—as opposed to "allies"—do.

But that all happened back when we knew a "basically good-news story" when we read one. That such a simple task has become a Mission Not Accomplished in the era of Neoconspeak is certainly a basically bad-news story.

—*Leon Hadar*

LE PEN'S LOOSE *LANGUE*

In late February, the presidential candidate of France's Front National (FN), Jean-Marie Le Pen, received widespread press coverage for saying, in an interview with *La Croix*, that the September 11, 2001, terrorist attack on the World Trade Center was merely "an incident," adding that the 3,000 who died should be seen in the context of current events in Iraq, where roughly the same number of people have died each month since the U.S. invasion. He went on to say that the number of fatalities that day in New York was far lower than those that resulted from the World War II bombings of Dresden and Marseilles.

Le Pen is no stranger to controversy; *au contraire*, one has the feeling he positively enjoys being anathematized. He and his party arouse pathological hatred whenever they appear; even when the FN opened an "office" in the virtual internet world called Second Life, opponents organized a virtual uprising to close it down, including virtual bombs and gunfire—clearly a longed-for real-life activity for some "liberals."

For a shrewd politician, Le Pen also has a habit of making sweeping historical observations, even though he must know that these are, at best, unhelpful to practical politicking. In 1987, he said, "I'm not saying the gas chambers didn't exist. I haven't seen them myself. I haven't particularly studied the question. But I believe it's just a detail in the history of World War Two." He repeated the sentiment at a 1996 meeting in Germany and was fined 1.2 million *francs* three years later by a German court. He has accused Jacques Chirac of being "on the pay roll of Jewish organizations." In 2005, he said that the German occupation of France

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during World War II "was not particularly inhumane."

His latest sally has attracted opprobrium from some of the more excitable and least-educated representatives of American conservatism, such as the following entries on one neoconservative blog (orthography unaltered): "Who cares . . . france will be an Islamic state by 2015. They're screwed." Also: "Here's a difference frog face. There was a declared WAR during WWII you senile pice of excriment." He has also attracted angry ripostes from more considerable personages, such as British RAF veterans, who naturally resent being even obliquely compared with Al Qaeda.

Such differences in perspective serve to underline the conceptual difficulties underlying Le Pen's latest brainchild: the European Parliament's newest official grouping, Identity, Tradition and Sovereignty (ITS), which contains MEPs from France, Italy, Belgium, Britain, Rumania, Bulgaria, and Austria under the chairmanship of the Front National's Bruno Gollnisch. Yet not all that much unites this disparate group, and it could be argued that an "alliance of nationalists" is almost a contradiction in terms. At the party's annual "Bleu, Blanc, Rouge" festival last year, Le Pen introduced delegates from foreign nationalist parties to the audience by joking, "These are our friends from abroad. They all hate each other—but they are our friends!"

This is Le Pen's fifth challenge for the presidency, and, at the age of 78, it will probably be his last. It is unlikely that he can repeat his extraordinary result of 2002, when he knocked out Lionel Jospin in the first round to be defeated by Jacques Chirac in the second. "Vote for the crook, not the fascist" was one common refrain of that unusual election, when all the forces of business-as-usual combined against the radical challenger. These same forces are trying to exclude Le Pen from the 2007 race altogether, by making it difficult for him to get the necessary 500 public officials to endorse his candidacy. As of early March, the FN is almost 100 names short.

The latest polls show Le Pen running in fourth place, behind the Socialist Segolene Royal, the Gaullist Nicholas Sarkozy, and the centrist François Bayrou. But he is (and we should be) skeptical of such polls, bearing in mind that they failed utterly to predict the 2002 first-round result. There have been media suggestions that he has become Demob happy and is campaigning as much to enjoy himself as to make serious political points.

Some have seen Le Pen's latest "anti-American" statement in that light, while others have regarded it as blatant opportunism in a country where anti-Americanism is a vote-winner among all segments of society. Yet Le Pen has always advocated France's cultural uniqueness and military independence, as well as checks on American power. For example, in 2002, he said, "The problem with the Americans is that their disproportionate power makes them undertake policies that aren't always balanced and well-considered, and therefore dangerous. Today, there is a worldwide tendency to dance to the tune of the powerful. I, on the other hand, am a French patriot concerned with the interests of France. Am I supposed to go crazy with admiration for the Americans just because they are Americans?"

His views on Islam and Israel are more complex. To quote French political commentator Dominique Moisi, cited in a 2002 interview with Le Pen in *Haaretz*, Le Pen "combines pro-Israeli and even pro-Zionist attitudes with anti-Jewish attitudes, and anti-Islamic attitudes with certain pro-Arab attitudes." His party has had both Jewish and Arab officeholders. He is nostalgic for French imperialism, yet scathing in his attacks on Israeli expansionism on the West Bank (although he believes that Israel should show no mercy to terrorists). He alienated some by supporting Saddam Hussein's government because it suppressed radical Islam—which, he correctly observed in *La Croix*, *"est dangereux quand il est dominant."* Yet he also supported Israel's attack on Iraq's nuclear reactor. He is an inveterate opponent of Islamic expansionism in France (his present manifesto calls for a ban on the building of new mosques in France), yet he has always stood up for pro-French Algerian Arabs, and, in 1957, he nominated and helped to engineer the election of France's first Muslim politician. Such views, far from being inconsistent, as has sometimes been charged, seem nuanced and even statesmanlike, by refusing to give blank checks to either side. He errs in suggesting that the majority of Muslims have sought to distance themselves from the "fundamentalists." In fact, the "mainstream" Muslim organizations have almost entirely failed to condemn the actions of their more literal coreligionists. Of course, no one can be right all the time.

Other Le Pen policies are similarly bold—and are likely to prove highly popular with voters (which is why Sarkozy is presently promoting a watered-down, insincere version of *Lepénisme*). Le Pen's manifesto calls for greater freedom of speech (for all, including the far left and Muslims); the reinstatement of the death penalty; the suppression of gang violence and the building of more prisons; the abolition of the European Commission and repeal of the Maastricht Treaty; the revival of the *franc* alongside the euro; the re-erection of trade barriers to ring-fence teetering French industry; and the abolition of inheritance taxes.

Yet his persistent and unnecessary forays into controversial areas of history, and his unfortunate similes, have a tendency to undercut what might otherwise be seen as profundity. While one could attribute such provocative statements to an admirable and unconditional attachment to free speech, some emanate from less edifying motives, such as his plentiful vein of coarse humor. For example, when asked by *Haaretz* what he thought of the Muslim veil, he quipped, "It protects us from ugly women!" Others are the product of his naturally impulsive and ebullient temperament. Still others are caused by a defiant dislike of being told what to think by people whose opinions he naturally does not respect.

While all or most of his statements can be defended, contextualized, or explained away, they do have the cumulative effect of making him sound less presidential than he really is. It is an unfortunate paradox that this honorable and highly intelligent man, who has devoted his whole life to his country and our civilization, undercuts his own credibility because of statements such as these. Meanwhile, such men as Jacques Chirac, who have never had an original idea or an idealistic impulse in their lives, rise to the highest offices of state—in France and across the West—and go to their graves laden with wealth and honors. It might have been different, had Le Pen only learned that there are times when it is better just to say nothing.

—Derek Turner

KOSOVO GETS INTERESTING

The problem of Kosovo, an already complex equation with many unknowns, is getting more vexing by the day. On February 2, U.N. special envoy Martti Ahtisaari unveiled his much-anticipated plan

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for the final status of the southern Serbian province, which has been under NATO-U.N. occupation since Bill Clinton's war against the Serbs in 1999. While avoiding the contentious word *independence*, Ahtisaari presented the framework for a new Albanian state that would have all the key attributes of sovereign statehood.

The period of international supervision envisaged by the plan, as well as a host of "guarantees" for the few remaining Serbs and other non-Albanians in the province, are but a fig leaf that cannot conceal the fact that Ahtisaari's plan gives everything to the Albanians and nothing to the Serbs. The promise of a "review" after two years is mendacious: If, on their current church-burning, dope-smuggling form, the KLA terrorists who run Kosovo are deemed worthy of independence, it is preposterous to hope that anyone would dare suggest otherwise two years from now. If 150 Serbian churches went up in flames, and a quarter-million Serbs and other non-Albanians were ethnically cleansed while tens of thousands of KFOR soldiers and UNMIK policemen were stationed in the province, Ahtisaari's "guarantees" will be worthless once they all leave and the KLA (under whatever name) takes over.

Ahtisaari's plan violates the U.N. Charter, the Helsinki Final Act of 1975, and Security Council Resolution 1244—all of which recognize Serbia's sovereignty and territorial integrity. It seeks to reward the most egregious violators of standards of civilized behavior in today's Europe. It is destabilizing because it helps create a base for *jihad* in the heart of Europe and sets a dangerous precedent that will be emulated by disenchanted minorities around the world.

Ahtisaari delayed presenting his plan from November 2006, when it was essentially completed, until after the general election in Serbia on January 21. In doing so, he tried to manipulate Serbia's electoral process by concealing the utter awfulness of his proposals during the election campaign, which improved the vote for President Boris Tadic's Democratic Party, which is deemed "pro-Western" and soft on Kosovo. Even Tadic has rejected Ahtisaari's proposals, however, calling them completely unacceptable.

On February 15, Serbia's parliament overwhelmingly rejected the plan. The government of Prime Minister Kostunica is adamant that it will never allow "the creation of another Albanian state on Serbian territory."

At the same time, the Albanians are growing restless, and there is escalating violence in the province, some of it directed against the representatives of "the international community" in Pristina. International administrators and peacekeepers fear that there will be more to come if the Albanians are not granted their fast track to full independence.

Ahtisaari and the main Western proponents of Kosovo's independence—the United States, Great Britain, and Germany—would like to push the proposal through the U.N. Security Council and impose the "solution" regardless of Serbia's objections. They cannot, however, as long as Russia remains firm in her threat to veto any resolution that has not been approved by Belgrade.

Earlier assessments that Moscow was bluffing, and that it would go along with the Western consensus in the end, have been proved wrong. In fact, in recent weeks, Russia's position has stiffened. Moscow will not support any plan that is not accepted by Serbia, President Vladimir Putin declared on February 10. His defense minister, Sergei Ivanov, warned that granting independence to Kosovo would trigger the disintegration of other states across Eurasia, "sparking a chain reaction and opening up Pandora's box." Konstantin Kosachev, head of the State Duma International Affairs Committee, said that Russia would veto Ahtisaari's plan if it goes to the Security Council. Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov declared that independence for Kosovo would have "the most negative consequences" for the Balkans and Europe and rejected any "imposition" of Ahtisaari's plan.

Regardless of Russia's motives—among which the U.S. refusal to accept the validity of the Kosovo precedent for Abkhasia, Ossetia, Karabakh, and Transdnistria figures prominently—Ahtisaari's current plan stands no chance of gaining acceptance at the U.N. Security Council. The Albanians and their foreign supporters, however, have their "Plan B": a unilateral declaration of independence, followed by individual recognition of Kosovo as an independent state by the United States, Britain, the Muslim world, and Serbia's historical foes in the region (Albania, Croatia, Bulgaria).

The problem with this "Plan B" is that the European Union will not agree to move into Kosovo to replace UNMIK, as envisaged by Ahtisaari's plan, without a Security Council resolution authorizing the change. Furthermore, there is no unanimity within the European Union. Those countries that oppose independence—notably Slovakia and Rumania, but also Spain, Greece, and Cyprus—would oppose any E.U. attempt to grant recognition to Kosovo without U.N. approval. Given Greece's ability to delay the recognition of Macedonia in the early 1990's, it is clear that strong opposition to a political decision even by one weak E.U. member—let alone by a group of four or five—could block any attempt by the Albanians and their friends to repeat the feat of Hans-Dietrich Genscher from Maastricht in December 1991.

There is considerable potential for a rift over Kosovo, not only between Washington and Moscow, but between the United States and the European Union. Such a rift may come about, either if Europe endorses a revision of Ahtisaari's plan that would address Belgrade's and Moscow's concerns or if Brussels refuses to succumb to the U.S. pressure to circumvent the United Nations altogether.

At a time when America has far more pressing problems elsewhere that demand Russia's support and Europe's assistance, it would be absurd to risk tension with either of them—let alone with both—in pursuit of a failed policy inherited from Bill Clinton that serves the interests of a murderous clique of criminals and terrorists. To that end, the United States must accept that Kosovo's independence would be bad not only for peace and stability in the region, or justice and common decency in world affairs, but for this country's interests.

—*Srdja Trifkovic*

OBITER DICTA

Our poet this month is **B.R. Strahan**, who taught poetry at Georgetown University until 2002. Mr. Strahan has had over 500 poems published in such journals as *America*, *Christian Century*, *Cross Currents*, the *Seattle Review*, the *Christian Science Monitor*, *First Things*, and the *Hollins Critic*. His latest book, *The Art of Losing*, is scheduled to appear in 2008..

Our cover is composed of pictures of the Albanians' destruction of Christian churches and icons in **Kosovo-Metohia**.

Our interior art is provided by our designer, **Melanie Anderson**. Mrs. Anderson received her B.F.A. from Northern Illinois University. Additional interior art is provided by **Nicholas Garrie**. Mr. Garrie, who works in a variety of media, hails from Rockford.

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by Thomas Fleming

Dead Monkeys and the Living God

Sir Elton John would like to "ban religion completely" because it stirs up "hatred toward gay people." Like so many giants of the entertainment industry, Elton John probably does not hate religion *per se* but only Christianity. Christophobia is the religion of Hollywood. Ask Barbra Streisand; ask the top brass at Disney or DreamWorks.

The hatred of Christ takes many forms, and, since at least the 16th century, one of the most influential has been science or, more properly (since many great scientists have been believers), *scientism*, the ideology that claims to be able to explain all things human and superhuman by its formulas and equations. In the early days, promoters of scientism had to be cautious to avoid the trouble that Galileo's big mouth landed him in. Descartes was so successful at disguising his project that he is still treated by the Catholic Encyclopedia as a sincere if capricious Catholic.

With the advent of Darwinism, however, the promoters of Christophobia began to take the gloves off. Darwin's bulldog, Thomas Henry Huxley, in making claims about evolutionary theory that his master was reluctant to make, helped to inaugurate the two great obscurantisms of our time: fundamentalism and scientism. Of the former, it is enough to say that, at their worst, those who insist on a literal interpretation of the Old Testament have not only abjured truth but rejected fundamental Christian tenets. Of the latter, I can already hear the objections: *Surely, you don't mean to accuse scientists of obscurantism. After all, obscurantists are those who oppose the progress of knowledge, and science is the form of knowledge that has made the most progress in modern times.*

Both statements are true, but, when famous scientists, such as James Watson and Francis Crick, step outside the boundaries of their discipline, they are often as ignorant as Elton John whining about "organized religion" and as dishonest and obscurantist as Pat Robertson talking about the fossil record.

I used to think that Carl Sagan had reached a plateau of stupidity to which no respectable scientist could hope to ascend. Sagan ridiculed the whole idea of God but insisted that there were extraterrestrials out there somewhere, beings that were powerful, intelligent, and benevolent. They had never contacted us simply because, at our stage of development, we were unworthy to receive them under our roof. Millions of dollars of sucker money were spent on efforts to persuade the ETIs to call us some time. Sagan's popular TV show, *Cosmos*, was an often amusing farrago of juvenile impudence and textbook disinformation. My favorite passage was his discussion of Hypatia, the Alexandrian Neoplatonist killed by a Christian mob. The learned Sagan filched his text from an encyclopedia.

Since Sagan's death, a new generation of obscurantists has risen to do battle against "the infamy." Not content with Sagan's pseudorationalist materialism, Richard Dawkins and Steven Weinberg have taken up the Elton John argument—that religious people are nasty beyond belief—and, in addition, they are naive enough to believe that they can (more or less) disprove the existence of God or at least prove the absurdity of theological arguments in favor of such a Being. Dawkins is simply a more brazen version of Huxley, a clever popularizer whose early writings on sociobiology contain patches of undoubted wit. However, as soon as he tries to step outside the sacred circle of evolutionary theory and enters the real world of historical man, he trips on the edge of the circle.

Well, an honest scientist might say, *Dawkins was always a bit too clever, always willing to run ahead of the evidence. Real scientists are more careful.*

Real scientists like, presumably, Steven Weinberg. Weinberg, who holds a named chair at the University of Texas at Austin, received the Nobel Prize in Physics (1979), the National Medal of Science (1991), and the Benjamin Franklin Medal of the American Philosophical Society (2004), which says he is—and here I am quoting from Professor Weinberg's far-from-humble website—"considered by many to be the preeminent theoretical physicist alive in the world today."

Physics is not a field for dummies, and, if science, as its teachers so often proclaim, teaches us how to pursue truth, Steven Weinberg ought to be able to undertake a rational critique of Christianity. A glance at some of his arguments (in, for example, *Facing Up: Science and Its Cultural Adversaries*), however, reveals the same mixture of ignorance and conceit that has typified science's attack on religion.

To be fair, Weinberg's critiques of "Intelligent Design Theory" are quite telling, and his remarks on the "anthropic principle" (the theory that an Intelligent Designer must have made a universe that culminated in a species that would try to understand it) are also persuasive. I think he is right to lump the semiscientific arguments used by creationists into the same category as Anselm's proof: They are useful in persuading a believer that the concept of God is not inconsistent with a rational or scientific view of the universe, but they cut no ice with an intelligent atheist. This is what we should expect. If God's existence could be proved, what need would there be of faith? If Weinberg could confine his critique to what he knows and understands, he might force serious religious thinkers to be a little less glib in their assumptions.

As a man who lives by his intelligence, Weinberg apparently thinks that by refuting this or that argument he is striking a damaging blow to the cause of religion. In a BBC interview, he told Jonathan Miller that Cardinal Manning, after reading Paley's *Natural Theology*, became convinced by "the wonderful adaptation of living things . . . that there had to be a creator."

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His source for this is "Lytton Strachey's wonderful little biography . . . in *Eminent Victorians*." There is no hint that Strachey had an obvious agenda or that Manning's faith is far too complex to be reduced to Anglican natural theology.

I know what Weinberg's response would be. In his laudatory review of Dawkins' *The God Delusion*, he complains that reviewers have unfairly criticized Dawkins for his ignorance of theology and philosophy. "Are we to conclude that opinions on matters of philosophy or religion are only to be expressed by experts, not mere scientists or other common folk?" I wonder how Weinberg would treat a book on the origin of the universe written by a theologian as ignorant of physics as Dawkins is ignorant of philosophy and theology.

Weinberg appears to have made some effort to attain the rudiments of an humane education, but he never seems to get anything quite right. When asked if he hates God, Weinberg responded that he hates Him the way he hates "Reverend Slope." He has apparently read *Barchester Towers*, without understanding that Trollope invites us to sympathize with even his most odious characters. He has learned a bit about the Anglican Church, but not enough to know that Anglican ministers, unless they have advanced in the hierarchy, are typically called Mr. Slope and never Reverend Slope. It is a small thing, but just the sort of slip a pretentious novice makes when he tries to discuss matters he does not understand. In matters of literature, history, and philosophy, "Darwinian man, though well behaved, at best is only a monkey shaved."

Weinberg's problems go far deeper than his ignorance of the Anglican Church. In one section of *Facing Up*, which appeared first in the *New York Review of Books*, the preeminent theoretical physicist alive in the world today treats us to the usual clichés of village atheists everywhere: Religious fanatics killed Gandhi, Sadat, and Begin; the universe is too unfair and nasty to have been created by a benevolent Being; Christianity sanctioned as well as opposed slavery. It is surprising he did not throw in " . . . unkind to blacks, Indians, women, and gays."

In one short essay, there is not enough space to survey the vast field of Weinberg's ignorance of historical man. Fortunately, he summed up his own position in a famous remark in 1999: "Religion is an insult to human dignity. With or without it you would have good people doing good things and evil people doing evil things. But for good people to do evil things, that takes religion."

Let us look at his reasoning. Evil people can always be counted on to do evil things, but it is only religion that inspires good people to do evil things. We shall come back to the question of what constitutes good and evil, but a rational person reading Weinberg would wish to ask him if he really believes that no one has gone to fight in an unjust war, for example, unless directed by religion. Were the two world wars of the 20th century religious wars? Were the communists and Nazis who killed hundreds of millions of people motivated by religion, or were they simply bad people out for a little harmful fun? Most leftists (and Weinberg is inevitably a leftist) would argue that many, if not most, Communist Party members were idealists who believed a good cause justified them in doing what the world regarded as evil. Unless we are prepared to accept the premise that political ideologies are only religions in disguise (a premise that would reduce Weinberg's argument to triviality), his statement is worse than nonsense: It is a lie that anyone but a child should be able to refute.

For Jewish leftists, Hitler is the *summum malum* of human history. Weinberg does concede that Hitler was not a religious man, but he suggests the road to Buchenwald was paved by centuries of Christian antisemitism. Typically, he offers no documentation. For him, Christian antisemitism is a self-evident truth to be received uncritically, while his own Jewish anti-Christianism is a purely rational response to superstition, certainly not an ethnic or religious prejudice. However, to some observers of the 20th century, including many non-Christians, it has seemed self-evident that the rejection of Christianity and the adoption of a materialist worldview similar to Weinberg's paved the way for Stalin's and Hitler's crimes.

The inability to confront the dark side of science is a trifle compared with these scientists' refusal to grapple with the problem of good and evil. Why does Dawkins think it is "good" to wipe out one species (e.g., the smallpox virus) to serve another? Perhaps he would say that we are higher on the evolutionary scale, but radical Darwinists may not use such language. Their teleology can be summed up by the phrase "stuff happens," and the amazing proliferation of beetles (to use Haldane's famous quip) is as significant as the evolution of man.

If Weinberg is unable to deal rationally with the Third Reich, his approach to Israel is intellectually dishonest and morally repugnant. As a secular Zionist, he admires Israel as a "liberal"—by which he must mean *leftist*—state. To justify his unqualified support for Israel, Weinberg claims it is a democracy in which Palestinians enjoy equal rights. Can he be serious? Does he know anything about the roadblocks erected to prevent non-Jews from owning, leasing, or working on most agricultural land? Has he ever tried to imagine what Muslims or Christian Israelis think of a national flag that represents only Jews? On Weinberg's view, scientists are supposed to examine the facts before recklessly throwing out hypotheses. To be fair to Weinberg, he may simply be lying in what he regards as a good cause.

Presumably, Weinberg regards the Israeli leadership as basically good people, and yet these leaders have been frequently condemned by other Israelis for denying justice to the Palestinians, bombing apartment buildings where women and chil-

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dren live, and committing a long string of terrorist atrocities that goes back to the 1940's. Of course, one might easily argue that the Palestinians are paying the price for their own terrorism, but even if, as I happen to believe, the Palestinians are currently acting worse than the Israelis, no morally serious person can defend, for example, Israel's recent attack on Lebanon, much less the illegal use of U.S. cluster-bombs against civilians. The Israelis are not evil people: They are defending their homes, their families, and the land they have won, from enemies who will stop at nothing; but, if a reckless disregard for the lives of noncombatants is wrong, as leftists and liberals seem to think, then Israel is a textbook case of good people doing evil things for nonreligious motives.

If either Weinberg or Dawkins had been thinking honestly and seriously about religion, he might have applied his knowledge of man as natural being to the terrifying problems with which philosophy and theology have been wrestling for two-and-a-half millennia. Do good and evil exist, and, if so, what are they, and how did they come into existence? Is man a puppet of material forces, or does he have free will, and, if so, how does he have it, and what are the moral consequences?

On these topics, Dawkins is impossibly and deliberately stupid. Unable to explain free will, he simply denies that it exists. Even a schoolboy would then want to ask him why, if we are all puppets, it is important to attack religion. Dawkins told Jonathan Miller that he began to doubt Christianity when he realized that people in different parts of the world have different ideas about God. Why has he never stopped to ask if his own faith in science is not as much a product of 20th-century Europe as a Christian's belief in the divine *Logos* is a product of Jewish religion and Greek philosophy?

Like most modernists, Dawkins is smugly complacent and satisfied with his superiority over other, more credulous, men. The arrogance of his most recent squib, *The God Delusion*, has been criticized by some atheists, and Dawkins even lost a fall to Stephen Colbert. In essence, Colbert asked him why he thought that a series of unintelligent natural processes had created a universe that ended up producing his intelligent book denying the existence of an intelligent being outside nature. In other words, how does the monkey-man come to make value judgments pro or contra the Creation?

In a rare moment of self-examination, Dawkins admitted he has a religious bent, though his religion appears to consist only of the worship of dead monkeys. In one of his rants against religion, Dawkins reveals himself as a fanatical true believer in scientism. After praising all that science has told us about the universe, he goes on:

> Science has eradicated smallpox, can immunize against most previously deadly viruses, can kill most previously deadly bacteria. Theology has done nothing but talk of pestilence as the wages of sin. . . . Science has put men on the moon and hurtled reconnaissance rockets around Saturn and Jupiter . . . Science knows the precise DNA instructions of several viruses and will, in the lifetime of many present readers, do the same for the human genome.

What Dawkins does not like to talk about is that science has made atomic bombs and incendiary devices that have killed millions of civilians; that science has created new, deadly toxins and weaponized microorganisms to be put in the service of violence and oppression; that science has made possible the totalitarian governments that killed over 100 million people in the 20th century. To get to the point, science and its stepchild technology have provided the weapons and techniques that made the 20th century a nightmare, and, once they really get going on the human genome—a prospect that Dawkins gleefully looks forward to—they shall be able to say truly, "You ain't seen nothing yet."

Naturally, Dawkins and Weinberg would absolve scientists and put the blame on the evil political leaders who have misused science and technology. This will not wash for two reasons: First, Dawkins and Weinberg hold a religion (such as Christianity) responsible for all crimes committed in its name, even if its prophets and theologians have spoken only the language of peace; second, and more to the point, a vast amount of funding for scientific research comes from governments that are looking for ever more effective means of killing and subjugating human beings. Why has so much money been spent on Weinberg's beloved particle physics? Ask the boys at Fermilab, and they will tell you that they are engaged in pure research that has nothing to do with nuclear weapons. That, presumably, is why it operates under the aegis of the Department of Energy. Why do we fund the exploration of space? Ask Dick Cheney and the advocates of SDI. Atheist physicists, when they are not snookering money from the pockets of Christian taxpayers in Texas, are pandering to the military-industrial complex. Yes, that last statement was extreme and unfair, but it is a good deal more fair than what scientists are writing about Christianity.

The inability to confront the dark side of science is a trifle compared with these scientists' refusal to grapple with the problem of good and evil. Why does Dawkins think it is "good" to wipe out one species (*e.g.*, the smallpox virus) to serve another? Perhaps he would say that we are higher on the evolutionary scale, but radical Darwinists may not use such language. Their teleology can be summed up by the phrase "stuff happens," and the amazing proliferation of beetles (to use Haldane's famous quip) is as significant as the evolution of man. If Dawkins, as a sociobiologist, would like to talk about fitness as the basis of morality, he would have to explain why I would be wrong to cut him up and feed him, piece by piece, to my children. I do not say it is impossible to deduce some kind of ethic from evolutionary biology. I made such an attempt in *The Politics of Human Nature*. But neither Dawkins nor Weinberg has the first idea of what an ethical system is.

As products of their culture, Dawkins and Weinberg cannot imagine any morality other than late 20th-century liberalism. Like most people, they are unreflective ethnocentrists, who *feel* (the only proper word) that their own culture is inherently superior to the rivals it intends to crush. In their obscurantism, they not only fail to offer any answers (good or bad), they do not know what the questions are. In *Revolt of the Masses*, José Ortega y Gasset made the oft-quoted observation that, "If anyone in a discussion with us is not concerned with adjusting himself to truth, if he has no wish to find the truth, he is intellectually a barbarian. That, in fact, is the position of the mass-man when he speaks, lectures or writes." Ortega had no hesitation in applying this to the specialized barbarians who conduct scientific research. Worse than Huns and the Mongol horde, these Christophobic barbarians intend the destruction of human civilization. If their bombs and toxins do not get us, their obscurantism will. c

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The Sleepers Awake
by B.R. Strahan

When we awoke from this dream
we found every thing changed.
Not one color or name
that we knew remained.

All the trees had turned to stone,
while every stone grew tongues to speak.
And each thing we heard was wonderful
and terrible, and beyond bearing.

So we laid ourselves down once more
In hopes of a better awakening.

Quatrains for a New Year
by B.R. Strahan

I

Roll up the map
and put the clocks to sleep.
Send the hunchback home
and close the cathedral up.

II

No symphony so round or slow
as steps go marching here.
The long face of the year
rounds on us and lays us low.

III

We snatch at sleep,
hoping for forgetfulness.
Harms we did lie folded away
like old letters in a box.

IV

Now we are ships clawing off
the rocks we stormed to reach.
On the beach the Sirens
have turned Harpy.

V

Another actor shuffles off
leaving us to examine
the stuck rhyme of our days,
the unlived lives.

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Ecrasez L'infame

The Persistence of Christophobia

by Tom Piatak

Imagine a magazine that argued that the central symbol of Judaism was inextricably bound up with monstrous evil, claimed Judaism's holy writings were lies, criticized what Jews believe and demanded they change their beliefs, attacked Judaism's most important holidays, asserted that Judaism was directly responsible for one of the most horrific slaughters in history—and declared that anyone who questioned Judaism's responsibility for that great crime was a liar or a bigot. An impartial observer would be forced to conclude that such a magazine harbored an animus against Judaism.

It is difficult to imagine such a magazine even existing in the United States, much less garnering any respect or prominence. If one substitutes *Christianity* for *Judaism* in the preceding paragraph, however, he will have to admit that there are magazines that publish all those arguments. Indeed, they are among our most prominent and respected journals of opinion: the *New Republic* (the fountainhead of neoliberalism) and *Commentary* (the fountainhead of neoconservatism).

Examples of Christophobia may be found in many other precincts of opinion journalism. Just before Christmas, in a column criticizing Episcopalians intent on maintaining orthodox Christian teaching on homosexuality, the *Washington Post*'s Harold Meyersohn attacked "the Catholic Church's inimitable backwardness." *Slate* has observed Christmas by describing the Gospel accounts of the Nativity as "legendary, contradictory, and ahistorical"; enumerating such "perennial yuletide joys" as "harried trips to mobbed shopping malls, wasteful spending on pointless presents, spikes in depressive and suicidal feelings"; and prominently featuring a column by Christopher Hitchens describing Christmas as "vile and insufferable." There probably is no more zealous Christophobe in opinion journalism than Hitchens, who remains faithful to the Bolshevik ideal precisely because the Bolsheviks were so good at killing Christians. As Hitchens told PBS, "one of Lenin's great achievements . . . is to create a secular Russia. The power of the Russian Orthodox Church, which was an absolute warren of backwardness and evil and superstition, is probably never going to recover from what he did to it."

Precisely because of their intellectual prominence, there is no denying the important contributions to Christophobia made by *Commentary* and the *New Republic*, especially the latter. Indeed, even as *Commentary* has begun to tone down its Christophobia in recent years, the *New Republic* has gone in the opposite direction, enthusiastically spearheading the campaign to censor Mel Gibson's *Passion of the Christ*—which was, in essence, an attempt to censor the public expression of Christian beliefs—and observing Christmas this year by republishing on its website economist James Henry's 1990 essay "Why I Hate Christmas," which argued for "an experimental two- to three-year moratorium on the whole affair." And the *New Republic*'s owner, Marty Peretz, just cannot seem to restrain himself. On October 9, 2006, he published an online essay attacking Norman Finkelstein, which, because Finkelstein is a professor at DePaul, also included Peretz's claim that all Catholic colleges are mediocre, his observation that fascism was "a recognizable Catholic tradition," and his assertion that the Catholic Church was complicit in the holocaust. Characteristically, Peretz began this offensive column by stating, "Please, I don't mean to offend anyone."

The claim that the Catholic Church was complicit in the holocaust is perhaps the cornerstone of contemporary Christophobia. Indeed, it has become a commonplace in our culture. As Sir Martin Gilbert observed in an essay in the July/August 2006 *American Spectator*,

> That the Pope and the Vatican were either silent bystanders, or even active collaborators in Hitler's diabolical plan—and "rabidly anti-Semitic" . . . has become something of a truism in Jewish educational circles, and a powerful, emotional assertion made by American-Jewish writers, lecturers, and educators.

There is reason to believe that the KGB was responsible for these smears. A high-ranking defector from Rumanian intelligence, Lt. Gen. Ion Pacepa, recently alleged that Rolf Hochhuth's play *The Deputy*, which first popularized these charges against Pius XII, was part of a KGB plot to discredit the wartime pontiff and the Catholic Church.

If the KGB wanted to blame Christianity for the holocaust, it was hardly alone. In the early 1980's, *Commentary* printed essays by Henryk Grynberg, Ruth Wisse, and Hyam Maccoby arguing that "The plain fact [is] that the Holocaust was prepared and caused by Christian anti-Semitism" and that "The delegitimation of the Jews has become one of Christianity's most lasting legacies in the modern world." The most radical of these essays was Maccoby's, which argued that "the Nazi episode" was part of "an unbroken historical connection in Christendom," that "the metaphysical hatred of Jews" was "endemic in Christendom," and that the antisemitism in Christianity derives "from its central doctrine and myth, the crucifixion itself." Maccoby thus became one of the first (if not the first) of many writers to blame the Cross for the swastika.

Maccoby even blamed Islamic antisemitism on Christianity: "It is true that in recent years Muslims, out of political motives, have begun to demonize Jews, but in doing so they have had to draw their material from Christian sources." Similar arguments have been made by the historian Bernard Lewis and the Anti-Defamation League's Abe Foxman, who has claimed that

Tom Piatak writes from Cleveland, Ohio.

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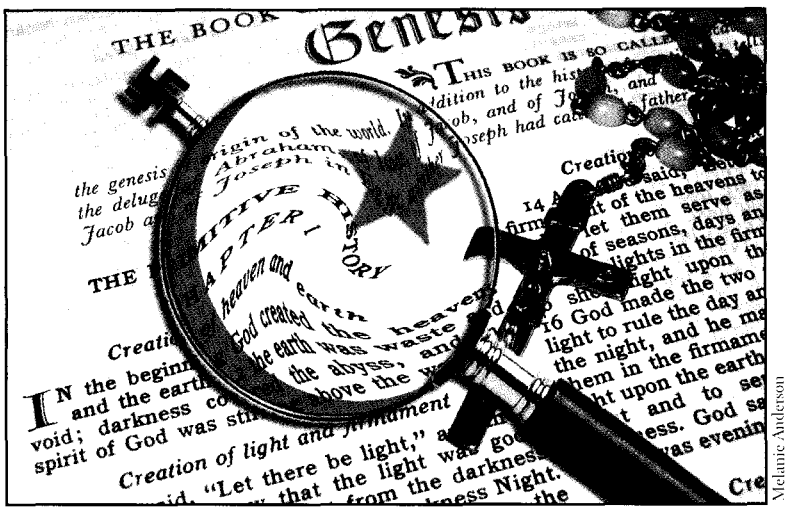
"the current explosion of anti-Semitism in the Moslem Middle East is fueled largely by myths and doctrines that originated in Europe." So great is the desire to blame the Church that She is even held responsible for the attitudes of a people who, since the beginning of their religion, have been attacking and attempting to subjugate both Christians and Jews, and whose scripture contains passages explicitly enjoining the killing of the same.

Despite the absence of any New Testament passage urging comparable violence by Christians, writers at *Commentary* have long expressed disdain for the New Testament. In 1992, Hyam Maccoby reviewed a book by a liberal Catholic priest and was thrilled that it "questions the historical truth of the Virgin Birth of Jesus, the perpetual virginity of Mary, the birth of Jesus in Bethlehem in a manger attended by Magi"; he was disappointed, however, that the author "refuses to allow that the Virgin Birth is derived from Hellenistic mythology." In 2001, Robert Wistrich gave a very positive review to James Carroll's *Constantine's Sword* and attacked the "web of multiple distortions woven into the primal Christian narrative that would fuel anti-Semitism through the centuries." Wistrich also wondered "how a Church that has not even come to terms with its own complicity in the most terrible event of the 20th century can still continue to proclaim that there is only one way to salvation."

The arguments of Maccoby and Wistrich would be taken to their logical conclusion in a 24-page article by Daniel Goldhagen in the *New Republic* ("What Would Jesus Have Done?"). Goldhagen begins his vituperative screed by asserting that "the main responsibility for producing this all-time leading Western hatred lies with Christianity. More specifically with the Catholic Church." He ends by asking, "what should be the future of this Church that has not fully faced its antisemitic history, that still has antisemitic elements embedded in its doctrine and theology, and that still claims to be the exclusive path to salvation?" A hint at Goldhagen's answer is found in his fulsome praise of James Carroll, whom even Robert Wistrich recognized as making "theological demands [that] would involve not a reformation of the Church but its virtual dissolution." Indeed, in his essay, Goldhagen denounces both the Cross, a symbol he sees as essentially antisemitic, and "the many historical fabrications and calumnies about Jews contained in the Christian Bible." If Christianity is founded on lies and its central symbol is evil, what good is it?

Goldhagen is relentless in his extremism. He labels both Pius XI and Pius XII as antisemites, and he brands Pius XII as a "Nazi collaborator." He claims that "[t]he Catholic Church . . . greeted many aspects of the Germans' pan-European eliminationist assault on the Jews with approval, sometimes even with enthusiasm," and that "[t]he Church was obviously content enough to watch more or less passively as the rest of Europe burned and the Germans pitilessly exterminated the Jews."

Far from recognizing the extremism of his views, Goldhagen portrays himself as a lonely and persecuted acolyte of truth: "[S]peaking the truth about Christianity and antisemitism, and especially about Christianity and the Holocaust, is too rare." Goldhagen's firm grasp of reality is shown in his claim that the focus on Pius XII's wartime record is, in essence, a clever Catholic ruse designed to divert focus from the real villain, the Church Herself, giving "the Church's defenders [the] strategic victory of whitewashing the Church's past." Goldhagen contends that those who do not share his views are liars and bigots, writing that the claim that the Nazis' antisemitism was not based on Christianity is "one of the most glaring public falsehoods of recent times" and that "only an antisemite and a historical falsifier can be counted upon to present Pius XII in the glowing manner required for canonization."


THE BOOK
Genesis
In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth
Creation of light and firmament
"Let there be light,"
Melanie Anderson

Neither Goldhagen nor the *New Republic* has retreated from Christophobia. In fact, Goldhagen amplified his charges in the magazine three years later, in an article attacking the Catholic Church's treatment of Jewish children rescued from the holocaust. (The fact that any such children existed—much less in the "thousands"—would have come as a surprise to anyone who based his knowledge of the holocaust on Goldhagen's earlier essay.) This time, Goldhagen attacked Pius XII's "criminal role during the Holocaust" and claimed that Pius XII "systematically spread . . . hatred and bigotry against a people while they [were] being persecuted and slaughtered," "approv[ed] Nazified race laws persecuting an entire people," and "fail[ed] to command bishops and priests . . . not to participate in the deportation of tens of thousands of people to their death." Such hysteria is rarely seen in the pages of a respected magazine and would never have been tolerated had it been directed at a target other than Christianity.

Goldhagen's essays are replete with lies and riddled with omissions. There is no evidence at all that Pius XII was "systematically spreading hatred and bigotry" against the Jews during the holocaust. The claims that Pius XII approved "Nazified race laws" and allowed "bishops and priests" to "participate in the deportations of tens of thousands of people to their death" are references to Slovakia, where a priest, Jozef Tiso, was the president. The Vatican, however, repeatedly protested against Slovakia's passage of anti-Jewish laws and the subsequent deportation of Slovak Jews; the Slovak bishops issued a pastoral letter against the deportations; and the deportations were stopped after these successive protests. In fact, the German envoy in Slovakia, Hans Ludin, complained to Berlin that "The process of evacuation of Jews from Slovakia is presently at a standstill. Due to the influence of the Church and the corruption of individual officials, approximately 35,000 Jews were given special identification papers. On these grounds they are not required to be evacuated." The deportations of Slovak

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Jews did not resume until October 1944, after the Germans had essentially seized control of Slovakia and the identity papers issued by Slovak officials were powerless to save anyone.

One would never learn from Goldhagen's essay that, during World War II, Vatican Radio denounced "the immoral principles of Nazism" and the "wickedness of Hitler," informing its listeners that "Hitler's war is not a just war and God's blessing cannot be upon it." One would also not learn that many churchmen honored by Israel for saving Jews gave credit to Pius XII, including Giovanni Montini (later Paul VI), Angelo Roncalli (later John XXIII), and Pietro Cardinal Pallazini, who said "the merit is entirely Pius XII's, who ordered us to do whatever we could to save the Jews from persecution."

Maccoby even blamed Islamic antisemitism on Christianity. So great is the desire to blame the Church that She is even held responsible for the attitudes of a people who, since the beginning of their religion, have been attacking and attempting to subjugate both Christians and Jews, and whose scripture contains passages explicitly enjoining the killing of the same.

One would search in vain for a citation of Anglican historian John Conway, who concluded, after reviewing the records of Vatican diplomats during World War II, that "the picture that emerges is one of a group of intelligent and conscientious men, seeking to pursue the paths of peace and justice, at a time when these ideas were ruthlessly being rendered irrelevant in a world of 'total war.'" Among the many places where these diplomats worked to save lives was Hungary, where, according to Hungarian Jewish historian Jeno Levai, "in the autumn and winter of 1944 there was practically no Catholic Church institution in Budapest where persecuted Jews did not find refuge."

Goldhagen claims that Pius XII "did . . . not lift a finger to forefend the deportation of the Jews of Rome and other regions in Italy." In fact, Pius XII sheltered 3,000 Jews at his summer residence at Castel Gandolfo. Pius' example was followed in churches, convents, and monasteries throughout Italy. As a result of such efforts, 85 percent of Italy's Jews survived the war, one of the highest percentages of any country occupied by the Nazis. Later, when Rome's chief rabbi Israel Zolli converted to Catholicism, he took as his baptismal name Eugenio, to honor the Pope born Eugenio Pacelli.

Quite apart from the many falsehoods and omissions that characterize his essays, Goldhagen's attempt to blame Christianity for antisemitism and the holocaust fails because it is contradictory. In his first essay, Goldhagen claims, on the one hand, that "Antisemitism . . . has flourished in all environments, outliving historical eras, transcending national boundaries, political systems, and modes of production" and, on the other, that "the main responsibility for producing this all-time leading Western hatred lies with Christianity." It is hard to see how Christianity can be blamed for such a pervasive phenomenon, which predated Christianity in the ancient world, has also existed in the Islamic world, and has flourished among Europeans who disdained Christianity, including Hitler. Indeed, Norman Ravitch, analyzing Christian antisemitism in *Commentary*, admitted that "It is almost impossible to decide whether Christian anti-Semitism was merely a legacy from the ancient world . . . or whether Christian teaching developed a violence rarely found in the pagan world." Nor does Goldhagen explain how, if Christianity was responsible for the holocaust, the mass murder of Europe's Jews had to await a time when Christianity was on the wane.

Goldhagen also fatally undermines his case by admitting that the Dutch bishops vigorously protested the Nazi treatment of the Jews, and that the Nazis retaliated by deporting Dutch Catholics (but not Dutch Protestants) who had converted from Judaism. As Goldhagen writes, "the Church quickly learned that these Catholics were doomed regardless of its protest." But if the Church could not save Catholics from murder by the Nazis, as even Goldhagen admits, how could She possibly stop the slaughter of Jews? Indeed, among Hitler's many victims were thousands of Catholic clergy and religious, including bishops and 3,000 priests from Poland alone.

The simple truth is that Goldhagen and his fellow writers in the Christophobic press blame Christianity for the holocaust because they want to, because a living Church is a far more satisfying villain than the dead ideology that was actually responsible. If Pius XII actually had been a "criminal" and a "Nazi collaborator," he would have done the kinds of things that collaborators and criminals actually did: ordered those under his authority to round up Jews and send them to death camps; forbidden Catholics to help Jews; and instructed Catholics to assist the Axis and oppose the Allies. It is absurd and offensive that Pius XII and the Catholic Church are treated as if they had actually behaved like this, instead of doing what they did—saving thousands of Jews from the holocaust, possibly up to 860,000, in the estimate of Israeli diplomat and scholar Pinchas Lapide. There is room for debating what else the Church might have done to abate the consequences of the Nazis' murderous fury; there is no room for suggesting, as both neoconservatives and neoliberals have done, that the Church and the Nazis were essentially on the same side, that the Church was "complicit" in the Nazis' crimes.

It was not Christianity that made the holocaust possible, but the decline of Christianity. As even Hyam Maccoby admitted, what gave rise to the holocaust "was the release afforded by Nazism from all vestiges of the restraint imposed by Christian morality." It is far easier these days, however, to blame Christian "hate" than to praise "the restraint imposed by Christian morality." Indeed, much of the elite press is eager to chip away at what remains of "the restraint imposed by Christian morality," especially in the area of sexual morality. And so for many years to come, Christians should continue to expect intemperate, hateful, and ignorant attacks on the Faith that created Western civilization. C

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When Experts Attack

The Church Growth Movement *Versus* Church Growth

by Aaron D. Wolf

Melanie Anderson

For over 30 years, the churches of America have been declining; their numbers, plummeting. Each year, a new set of numbers emerges from the various denominational headquarters, telling the tale. The liberal Protestant Mainlines are in the worst shape, as the figures for 2006 to 2007 indicate. According to the National Council of Churches, the Episcopal Church, U.S.A., down to 2,247,819, reported a decrease of 1.59 percent over the last year. The Presbyterian Church (USA), down to 3,098,842 members, reported a decrease of 2.84 percent. The United Methodist Church, down to 8,075,010 members, reported a decrease of 1.36 percent. The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, down to 4,850,776, reported a decrease of 1.62 percent. The American Baptist Churches in the USA, down to 1,396,700, reported a decrease of 1.97 percent. And the extremely liberal United Church of Christ, down to 1,224,297, reported a decrease of 3.28 percent.

Their conservative counterparts are not faring much better. The largest Protestant denomination, the Southern Baptist Convention, at 16,270,315 members, reported a slight increase of 0.02 percent. The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, down to 2,440,864, reported a decrease of 0.93 percent. Only the Catholic Church, at 69,135,254 members nationwide, managed to buck the trend, reporting an increase of 1.94 percent.

Year after year, the new numbers come in and the presses get rolling, cranking out new material designed to stimulate church growth. A few old cranks insist on discussing the problem in outdated terms: sin, secularism, "consciences seared with a hot iron." But those outdated ideas do not sell books; they do not give us the quick fix that we need. For that, we must turn to the experts, the gurus of the Church Growth Movement. For they have achieved success, and, as with any good business model, that success can be duplicated.

The experts have assignments for everyone—clergy and laity. For laymen, the assignment is to get creative. "It really is true," writes Bill Hybels, in his latest book, *Just Walk Across the Room: Simple Steps Pointing People to Faith*, "the spread of the gospel . . . boils down to whether you and I will continue to seek creative ways to engage our friends, inviting them to explore the abundance of the Christ-following life."

Making use of these creative ways amounts to becoming a little Freud, getting inside the heads of your friends and neighbors to determine what their felt needs are, and assuring them that they, like you, can find answers to those needs—coping with suburban *Anfechtung*, help with parenting, escaping the "debt trap"—in the abundance of the "Christ-following life."

"It is my deep conviction," adds expert Rick Warren, author of the *New York Times* best-seller *The Purpose-Driven Church*, "that anybody can be won to Christ if you discover the key to his or her heart. . . . It may take some time to identify it. But the most likely place to start is with the person's felt needs."

Based on this notion of meeting "felt needs," it behooves the leadership (those we used to call clergy, before ordination became a sign of ecclesiastical snobbery) to get creative, too. For, once the layman has creatively lured his friends to church, the last thing he needs is to be beaten over the head with *churchianity*, *churchese*, or any other derogatory term that the experts can coin to describe that traditional quality in churches that so repels today's "unchurched" (formerly "unbelievers").

Among the trappings of *churchianity* are stained-glass windows depicting Our Lord, His Virgin Mother, or the Saints (too expensive anyway); crosses and crucifixes (what do such symbols mean to the unchurched?); liturgy, creeds, and hymnody, and especially—gasp!—chanting; and sermons about irrelevant topics, such as the Annunciation or how God hates

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divorce. These things do not address the felt needs of today's unchurched.

In his autobiographical work *Rediscovering Church: The Story and Vision of Willow Creek Community Church*, cowritten with his wife, Lynne, Hybels recalls the Dutch Calvinist church of his boyhood which, in his estimation, was designed to cater to the "already convinced." Taking a defiant and mocking tone, he describes the traditional parts of Christian worship, including the recitation of the Creed, which was a "hit" for the "veterans," because they "had it memorized." He finds it completely irrelevant for believers and off-putting to the "unchurched" to bother with "ancient hymns" that contain such words as "seraphim and cherubim," and he particularly despises the "stand-up-sit-down thing." And woe be unto any pastor who would dare to preach from the Minor Prophets ("no, please, no")!

In order for there to be babies to baptize, they must first be born. But "society's norms" have changed, and the American churches have changed right along with them.

America's Christian "veterans" have missed the insult. Far from being angry that this "expert" thinks the traditions of their forefathers are a barricade on the path to Heaven, they have made Hybels a best-selling author and have eagerly joined the Willow Creek Association, so that their congregations (9,500 and counting) can be remade in his image.

After all, Bill Hybels is "successful." Over 24,000 people walk through the doors of Willow Creek every Sunday—past the food court and the racket-ball court and the basketball court and into the giant conference-center sanctuary, dotted with theater seats facing a stage on which professional rock musicians and actors reveal the great abundance of the Christ-following life.

Expert Rick Warren is no slouch, either. In a Pew Forum interview in 2005, he blushingly told the journalists gathered before him in Washington that his congregation

> Saddleback [Community Church] is the largest church in America. We had our 25th anniversary on Easter this year. I did 12 services. We had 45,000 in attendance and I preached 12 services in a row. Two weeks later, we celebrated our anniversary and we had never had the church in one location, so we rented Angel Stadium and had 30,000 at Angel Stadium. I have 82,000 names on the church roll.

And, lest you think that, in Warren's estimation, size alone matters, he insists that "[P]eople put up with the size in order to get the benefits—they say, 'I like the teaching, I like the programs, I like the music, and I like the ministries,' and things like that. So it's a myth that people go because they want the size."

One reason so many churches are running panting after these experts is summed up in the term *transfer growth*. The gurus of the Church Growth Movement do not like it, because it draws attention to the fact that they are stealing members from other, more boring churches instead of reaching the "unchurched." No, insists Warren,

> Saddleback is unique in that 78 percent of the members of our church had no religious background prior to joining the church. It is a church of conversion growth. We've baptized about 14,000 adults in the last eight years. So that means this is not a church that grew at the expense of other churches.

This statement is somewhat misleading, when you consider that "no religious background" or "unchurched" often means, for statistical purposes, that so-and-so has not regularly attended some other church over the last six months, and that "one baptism for the remission of sins" is, being interpreted, to say "one baptism by us, when you finally decide to renounce the baby-baptism of your distant, meaningless past."

Researchers who support the Church Growth Movement contradict Warren's enthusiasm, even indicating that there is a deliberate deception going on. Thom S. Rainer writes, "When I shared with many of the leaders of these congregations that most of the growth in American megachurches the past 20 years had come from transfer growth (Christians moving from one church to another), few were surprised." Rainer, who is quite sympathetic to the aims of the Church Growth Movement, admits that

> Every level of research I have seen on megachurches in the past 20 years, including my own, has pointed to a clear and growing trend: The percentage of American churchgoers attending churches with an attendance of 2,000 or more is increasing. More church attendees are worshipping at megachurches, and fewer attendees are heading to smaller churches.

This trend cuts across denominational lines. George Barna, the most celebrated Church Growth advocate/number cruncher, writes in *Christianity Today*,

> Catholics are 22% of the adult population, but they constitute 47% of those who attend a megachurch. Even though megachurches are seen as a Protestant phenomenon, barely half (53%) of the adults attending megachurches go to a Protestant church. That represents about one out of every ten adults attending a Protestant church and projects to about 5 million of the 53 million adults attending a Protestant church in a typical week.

Two things are certain: More and more Americans are flocking to megachurches; and more and more Americans are not going to church at all. In other words, the sheep are wandering off to another pasture, then wandering off a cliff. Barna indicates that a staggering 20 million have gone from megachurches and their veteran impersonators to something they call *homechurch*. Overall, the percentage of Americans attending Christian churches each Sunday has dropped from 20.4

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percent in 1990 to 18.7 percent in 2000—and down to 17.7 percent in 2004. During that same period, the U.S. population has grown by 18.1 percent—more than 48 million people. So the churches are nowhere near keeping up with the overall population. Thus, Thom Rainer notes that "94% of our churches are losing ground in the communities they serve."

Why are most American churches "losing ground"? Can all of this be laid at the feet of Hybels and Warren, the leading Church Growth experts? Is it widespread apostasy? The triumph of the Spirit of the Age? When, 40 years ago, the more conservative churches were seeing tremendous transfer growth from the liberal Mainlines, who were slowly dying even then, Mainline apostasy was cited as the cause. In an article for the Associated Baptist Press, Greg Warner writes that,

> While mainline churches could claim 60 percent of the total Protestant congregants in 1900, their share fell to 40 percent in 1960. Many religious observers and some sociologists attributed the drop—and simultaneous growth of conservative churches—to the lethargy of liberalism and the appeal of biblical certainty.

"But," Warner adds, "simple demographics can account for almost three fourths of the mainline decline." Could it really be that simple? Yes, say Michael Hout of the University of California-Berkeley, Andrew Greeley of the University of Arizona, and Melissa Wilde of Indiana University: "For most of the 20th century, conservative women had more children than mainline women did." In fact, "Differences in fertility rates account for 70 percent of the decline of mainline Protestant church membership from 1900 to 1975 and the simultaneous rise in conservative church membership . . . "

And now, conservative Protestants and Catholics have finally caught up. "Fertility rates are now virtually the same" for the liberal mainlines and conservative Christians, writes Warner. Thus, the liberals and conservatives are in the deathbed together, as the trio of sociologists write, for, "Unless conservative[s] increase their family size or mainline Protestants further reduce theirs, this factor in mainline decline will not be present in the future."

Simply put, in order for there to be babies to baptize, they must first be born. They are not, and the churches are dying.

Take one example: In 1961, the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod baptized 82,000 babies. In 2004, only 33,000—a staggering decline of 60 percent. And the numbers released in late August 2006 for 2005 are worse: Only 31,701 children were baptized (down 1,150).

Blithely, the church's leaders pass over this defect, as a press release from the Missouri Synod indicates: "In the 1950s and '60s, churches saw a 'natural increase' because families were larger, says LCMS Senior Research Analyst Dr. John O'Hara. Today's families are much smaller, and societal norms regarding religious participation have changed, he said."

Indeed, they have. "Society's norms" changed, and the American churches have changed right along with them, following the Whore of Babylon to her sure destruction. In 1930, with the Anglican Church's Lambeth Conference, the Church of England caved in to the propaganda campaign waged by the neo-Malthusians and their Babylonian queen, Margaret Sanger, editor of the *Woman Rebel* and founder of what is now called Planned Parenthood. Eschewing the divine blessing of the *Logos* uttered on Day Six of Creation, "Be fruitful," and the solemn command that followed, "and multiply," the Episcopalians spoke their own destruction into existence by transgressing against 2,000 years of unbroken Christian teaching, East and West, Protestant and Catholic. For them, large families were bovine, the fruit of the unrestrained actions of an ignorant people lacking self-control.

> Further, seeing that the primary purpose for which marriage exists is the procreation of children, [this conference] believes that this purpose as well as the paramount importance in married life of deliberate and thoughtful self-control should be the governing considerations in that intercourse.

Moral and physical suicide sounds so much better, if you talk about it in spiritual terms.

> Where there is clearly felt moral obligation to limit or avoid parenthood, the method must be decided on Christian principles. The primary and obvious method is complete abstinence from intercourse (as far as may be necessary) in a life of discipline and self-control lived in the power of the Holy Spirit. Nevertheless in those cases where there is such a clearly felt moral obligation to limit or avoid parenthood, and where there is a morally sound reason for avoiding complete abstinence, the Conference agrees that other methods may be used, provided that this is done in the light of the same Christian principles. The Conference records its strong condemnation of the use of any methods of conception control from motives of selfishness, luxury, or mere convenience.

After this self-important celebration of unselfish selfishness, the American churches began to fall, one by one. The old Federal Council of Churches quickly followed Lambeth by not only endorsing but recommending contraception. Mainline acceptance of modern Onanism penetrated the Mainline congregations, and their numbers began to decline. And the conservatives followed, a few lengths back. In the 40's, Walter A. Maier of the old Lutheran Hour radio broadcast called Sanger a "she-devil" and denounced the hedonism of liberal mainline Christianity. By the 50's, Prof. Alfred Rehwinkel, a conservative defender of a literal interpretation of Genesis, was celebrating Sanger and encouraging the same "self-control" that the Anglicans demanded in 1930. Rehwinkel's book, in which he lauded Sanger's "brilliance" and "God-given talents," was published under the thoroughly modern title *Planned Parenthood*, the name Sanger used to rechristen her Birth Control League.

T.S. Eliot, in his *Thoughts After Lambeth*, wrote:

> The World is trying the experiment of attempting to form a civilized but non-Christian mentality. The experiment will fail; but we must be very patient in awaiting its collapse; meanwhile redeeming the time: so that the Faith may be preserved alive through the dark ages before us; to renew and rebuild civilization, and save the World from suicide.

At present rates, we won't have to wait too much longer. c

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Once Upon a Time in Hollywood

From Eternity to Here

by Roger D. McGrath

Strange as it may seem today, once upon a time, Hollywood respected Christianity. Many movies had biblical themes—some were box-office blockbusters—but, more importantly, many others had scenes depicting religion as an integral part of American culture. The public demanded it. The silver screen was full of families saying grace before a meal or attending religious services; chaplains giving last rites to dying men or comforting troops; pioneers praying, singing hymns, or building churches. Leading men played priests: Bing Crosby in *Going My Way*, *The Bells of St. Mary's*, and *Say One for Me*; Pat O'Brien in *Angels with Dirty Faces*, *The Fighting 69th*, *Fighting Father Dunne*, and *The Fireball*; Spencer Tracy in *San Francisco*, *Boys Town*, *Men of Boys Town*, and *The Devil at 4 O'Clock*; Frank Sinatra in *The Miracle of the Bells*. And leading ladies played nuns: Loretta Young in *Come to the Stable*; Deborah Kerr in *Black Narcissus* and *Heaven Knows, Mr. Allison*; Rosalind Russell in *The Trouble With Angels* and *Where Angels Go, Trouble Follows*; Audrey Hepburn in *The Nun's Story*; Julie Andrews in *The Sound of Music*.

Christianity and *actors* are words that now seem antithetical. Yet, in years past, there were good numbers of actors in Hollywood who could rightly be described as practicing Christians. The largest number were Catholics, including Don Ameche, John Barrymore, James Cagney, Spencer Tracy, Pat O'Brien, Bing Crosby, Gary Cooper, George Murphy, Robert Ryan, Frank Sinatra, Gene Kelly, and Gregory Peck among the male leads, and Loretta Young, Irene Dunne, Rosalind Russell, Grace Kelly, Maureen O'Hara, Lucille Ball, Jane Wyatt, Jeanne Crain, Helen Hayes, and Maureen O'Sullivan among the female stars. Catholic directors included John Ford, Raoul Walsh, Leo McCarey, Frank Capra, Jack Conway, and Alfred Hitchcock. Many of these actors and directors regularly attended Mass at Good Shepherd in Beverly Hills or St. Martin of Tours in Brentwood. Other churches where actors could be found included St. Victor's in Hollywood, St. Monica's in Santa Monica, and Corpus Christi in Pacific Palisades.

From the 1930's through the 1960's, there was a distinct and active Catholic community in Hollywood, and, while male stars played a role, their female counterparts made the larger contribution. Among the latter was Loretta Young. She was deeply troubled by the growing loss of decency in film and television, and a preoccupation with depravity. "We can't keep focusing attention on depravity," she said, "because it goes hand in hand with utter despair." She never despaired and championed the cause for cleaner motion pictures and television programs, organized and contributed to charities, and volunteered at hospitals. In 1957, she went to Rome for a private audience with Pope Pius XII. Late in her career, she was slated to play Mother Cabrini in a screen biography of America's first saint, but the project never came to fruition.

Young was starring in movies by the time she was in her late teens. She was headstrong and foolish, and living life in the fast lane. Fr. Patrick Ward, a young Jesuit, lectured her in a manner that took the teenage star by surprise. Instead of the sycophantic flattery she had come to expect, he told her,

> Don't you know . . . that God didn't give you your talent just so you could glory in it for the gratification of your own ego? It was given to you to develop for His glory. You are in a position to be an example to others. You have no right to lead a selfish personal life. For whether you want it this way or not, as a movie star you will be an example. You dare not be a bad example.

His warning evidently had some effect. When only 22 years old, she fell in love with Clark Gable, a nonpracticing Catholic, during the filming of *The Call of the Wild* in 1935. Although Gable was married, they had a torrid affair that left Young pregnant. Abortions were illegal but surprisingly easy to get in Hollywood. Young refused to consider such an option, quietly going into seclusion once she could no longer disguise her pregnancy. After giving birth to a daughter, she reappeared in public, telling reporters that she had adopted two little girls and was overjoyed. Then a new story was released saying that the mother of one of the little girls had taken her daughter back. The subterfuge worked, and few suspected that the girl Young was left with was indeed her own daughter. The truth was not revealed until more than a half-century later.

Young followed such a course to avoid both abortion and being the bad example Father Ward had warned her about. When abortion was legalized, Young became an active participant in the pro-life movement, and her car displayed a bumper sticker that read, "Your Mama was Pro-life, Dawlin'." She was an important supporter of St. Anne's Maternity Hospital for Unmarried Mothers in Los Angeles. She served seven years as president of the St. Anne's Foundation, which also established the Holy Family Adoption Service. Young was recognized in 1961 for her "noble contribution to the unknown world of the unwed mother and her baby" for her work with St. Anne's.

Including a few appearances as a child in silent movies, Young was in 103 films. In 1948, she won the Academy Award for Best Actress for *The Farmer's Daughter* (1947), and, in 1950, she was nominated in the same category for her role as a nun in *Come to the Stable* (1949). She moved to television with her own show in 1953 and took the new medium by storm, ultimately winning the Golden Globe and the Emmy three times each. Her show topped the ratings for nine seasons.

Contributing editor Roger D. McGrath is the author of Gunfighters, Highwaymen, and Vigilantes.

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In her book *The Things I Had to Learn* (1961), she wrote,

> I believe that a life without religion is, truly, an impoverished existence. I believe in the efficacy of prayer and I have a deep and sorrowful sympathy for one who is without faith. I believe our Father answers every prayer—all prayers—with His matchless, inscrutable wisdom, with infinite compassion and with love.

She shared her own faith and love during the last three decades of her life by working as a volunteer at a hospice in Palm Springs and by supporting Catholic charities. For a time, she also funded and ran the Loretta Young Youth Project of Phoenix.

Irene Dunne, known for her many madcap comedies, also took her religion seriously. In 1960, the *Los Angeles Examiner* reported that she "is a devout member of the Catholic faith and has dedicated her life to the highest Christian ideals." During the 50's, she initiated a Communion breakfast in her home. Attendance reached such proportions that the breakfast was moved to the Grand Ballroom at the Beverly Hilton Hotel. "People in Hollywood need spiritual guidance," said Dunne, "because of the pedestal they are on." While marriages in Hollywood are often of short duration, she wed Dr. Francis J. Griffin in 1928 and remained his wife until he died in 1965. At the same time, she made movies that won critical and popular acclaim and earned five Oscar nominations for best actress.

Educated by the Sisters of Loretto at St. Benedict's Academy in Louisville and, later, at the Loretto Convent in St. Louis, Dunne was forced to finish her schooling at a public high school in Indiana following her father's death. After winning a scholarship and graduating from the Chicago Music College, she worked in the theater in New York and on the road. By 1930, she was under contract to RKO and appeared in *Leathernecking*, a musical comedy. The next year, she starred opposite the handsome Richard Dix in *Cimarron*, which was to become a classic. For her role as Sabra, the courageous and long-suffering wife, she received her first nomination for best actress.

Cimarron was only one of four movies she made in 1931, and others followed at the rate of three or four per year throughout the 30's. Her co-stars—a who's who of Hollywood—included Adophe Menjou, Pat O'Brien, Joel McCrea, Charles Bickford, Walter Houston, Ralph Bellamy, Fred Astaire, Robert Taylor, and Randolph Scott. Although she had already appeared in several comedies, *Theodora Goes Wild* (1936) established her as Hollywood's premier comedienne and won her a second nomination for best actress. In 1937, she was paired with Cary Grant in *The Awful Truth*, a comedy that was one of the best of its generation and won Dunne her third nomination. The chemistry between Dunne and Grant was perfect, and they were teamed again in *My Favorite Wife* (1940) and *Penny Serenade* (1941). Because she was so creative and delightful on the set, Grant called Dunne his favorite leading lady. Between her films with Grant, Dunne made *Love Affair* (1939) with Charles Boyer and was nominated a fourth time for best actress for her portrayal of Terry McKay. Some argue that *Love Affair* was better than its 1957 remake, *An Affair to Remember*, generally considered one of the best movies of all time.

The war years saw her make two classics, *A Guy Named Joe* (1943) with Spencer Tracy and Van Johnson, and *The White Cliffs of Dover* (1944) with Alan Marshal. She starred in three comedies as well. Following the war, her work slowed to one film per year, and, although she was now approaching 50 years old, these movies were some of her best. *Anna and the King of Siam* (1946), with Rex Harrison, was followed by *Life With Father* (1947), with William Powell, and, in 1948, she received her fifth nomination for her role in *I Remember Mama*. She made her last movie in 1952, followed by numerous appearances in television dramas. In 1985, she was a Kennedy Center honoree for her long and critically acclaimed career.

I cannot help but conclude that America has changed, that we once took our Christianity seriously, and that, therefore, many of the directors, actors, and actresses that we sent to Hollywood took their Faith seriously.

Throughout her movie career and beyond, she worked tirelessly on behalf of the Catholic Church. In 1949, she was awarded an honorary doctor of laws degree by St. Mary's College as well as the Lactare Medal, presented annually by the University of Notre Dame to the American Catholic "whose genius has ennobled the arts and sciences, illustrated the ideals of the church and enriched the heritage of humanity." In 1951, she was elected president of St. John's Hospital Foundation in Santa Monica and awarded the Lateran Cross by the Lateran Basilica Chapter of Canons for her "exemplary life and service to the Roman Catholic Church." In 1953, she received the Award of Merit from the Sister Elizabeth Kenny Foundation, and, in 1957, she was given the Pro Deo at Juventute Award from the National Council of Catholic Youth. In 1965, she became the first woman to receive the Bellarmine College Medal for work in the arts and "a variety of civic and philanthropic activities."

Born in 1907, Rosalind Russell remained a devout Catholic all her life. She appeared in 48 movies and was a leading lady in all but a few of them. She made her first films in 1934; the next year, she was cast in her first lead in *The Casino Murder Case*, a movie that she later dismissed as her worst. She made three other movies in 1935, including *China Seas* with Clark Gable and Jean Harlow, and then made four movies in 1936. For the next decade, she made two or three movies per year. In 1940, she was teamed with Cary Grant in *His Girl Friday*, a film many critics consider her best. Although Russell and Grant worked perfectly together, including extemporizing dialogue as they went, and the movie was a hit, they were never paired again. They remained close friends, though, and Grant was best man for Frederick Brisson when he married Russell. *His Girl Friday* was one of nearly two-dozen movies in which Russell played a successful professional woman or, as she herself called them, "boss-lady pictures."

My Sister Eileen (1942) brought Russell the first of four nominations for best actress. She was nominated a second time for her performance in *Sister Kenny* (1946), the true story of an Australian nurse who developed a new method for treating polio.

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Through her charity work, Russell had made the acquaintance of Kenny and was so inspired by the nurse's work that she fought to bring Kenny's life to the screen. In 1947, Russell gave another brilliant dramatic performance in *Mourning Becomes Electra* and was nominated for best actress for a third time. Many thought that the third time would be the charm, but fellow Catholic Loretta Young took the Oscar in 1948. Russell's film career was in decline by the 1950's, and, although she continued to make movies, she spent more time on the stage in New York. She starred in *Auntie Mame* on Broadway for two years and then won her fourth nomination for best actress for the movie version of the play, which came to the screen in 1958.

Melanie Anderson

In addition to her Academy Award nominations, she won the Golden Globe award five times and the Golden Laurel once. In 1973, she received the Jean Hersholt Humanitarian Award for her years of charitable activities. Among those activities was the creation of the Rosalind Russell Arthritis Foundation.

The short but brilliant career of the incomparably beautiful Grace Kelly has become a Hollywood legend. In five years, the blond-haired, blue-eyed former model made 11 films; more than half of them are considered classics. After a small role in *Fourteen Hours* (1951), she teamed with Gary Cooper the following year in one of the greatest Westerns ever, *High Noon*. Her exquisite beauty, seductive grace, and fine performance made the 22-year-old a star overnight. In 1953, she appeared in *Mogambo* with Clark Gable and Ava Gardner, which won her a nomination for best supporting actress, and then starred in five films in 1954—*Rear Window* with James Stewart, *Green Fire* with Stuart Granger, *Dial M for Murder* with Ray Milland, *The Country Girl* with Bing Crosby, and *The Bridges at Toko-Ri* with William Holden. For her work in *The Country Girl*, she won the Academy Award for best actress. In 1955, she was paired with Cary Grant in her third Alfred Hitchcock thriller, *To Catch a Thief*. The next year, she starred in her final two films, *The Swan* with Alec Guinness and *High Society* with Bing Crosby and Frank Sinatra. In the latter picture, a musical version of *The Philadelphia Story*, she sang "True Love" with Crosby, which earned her a gold record.

While filming *To Catch a Thief*, Kelly met Prince Rainier of Monaco. He courted her for a year, and, in April 1956, they were wed at the Cathedral of St. Nicholas. With marriage, at Rainier's insistence, came retirement from Hollywood. Until her death in a car accident in 1982, Princess Grace worked tirelessly for a long list of charitable organizations and read biblical narratives on television to raise money for Christian causes. She was particularly helpful to her good friend Fr. Patrick Peyton and his Rosary Crusade. All her life, she herself prayed daily and on one occasion made a pilgrimage to Lourdes. Even when making movies, she made it a point to attend Mass. When in Hollywood, she could be found at Good Shepherd in Beverly Hills or at Corpus Christi in Pacific Palisades on Sundays.

The princess served as president of the Red Cross in Monaco and held an annual fundraising ball that featured performances by such Hollywood friends as Cary Grant and Frank Sinatra. She also established a yearly Christmas party for the children of Monaco and served in an organization that provided medicine and educational materials to undeveloped countries. The mother of two daughters and a son, she became an important supporter of the La Leche League, a group devoted to the promotion of breast feeding.

While Grace Kelly had a short but spectacular career in movies, Maureen O'Hara's career spanned more than 60 years, perhaps the longest of anybody in the business. Standing over 5'8" and having been an outstanding athlete as a girl, the strong and well-proportioned O'Hara was a match for her tall and imposing leading men, including Randolph Scott, Joel McCrea, Rex Harrison, and John Wayne. Called the "Queen of Technicolor," her large, lustrous green eyes; perfectly sculptured bone structure; flawless, fair skin; and red hair made the Irish colleen a stunning presence on the screen.

O'Hara began to attract widespread attention in her third film, *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* (1939), but it was in her eighth film, *How Green Was My Valley* (1941), that she first worked with the legendary director John Ford, a relationship that would continue for decades. Ford said she was the "best bloody actress in Hollywood." He cast her opposite John Wayne three times, resulting in the classics *Rio Grande* (1950); *The Quiet Man* (1952), which won the Academy Award for best picture; and *The Wings of Eagles* (1957). She later worked with Wayne in *McLintock* (1963) and *Big Jake* (1972). O'Hara played the female lead in more than 50 motion pictures before retiring in 1973. She came out of retirement to make several films during the 1990's. Her last appearance was in a made-for-television movie in 2000, 52 years after her first two films, *Kicking the Moon Around* and *My Irish Molly*. Despite an outstanding body of work, including the Christmas classic *Miracle on 34th Street*, she was never nominated for an Oscar, although she was twice nominated for the Golden Laurel. She has received several lifetime-achievement awards, the Newspaper Critics Award, the Photoplay Gold Medal, the Box Office Award, the Redbook Gold Medal, the Exhibitors Laurel, the Golden Boot, and the Western Heritage Wrangler Award.

Maureen O'Hara came from a devoutly Catholic family. An older sister, Peggy, took her vows as a nun with the Irish Sisters of Charity. When Maureen, at 17 years of age, signed her first movie contract, the event was witnessed by her parish priest. She has been an active supporter of numerous charities throughout her career, including the Boys Club, the City of Hope, and the Ireland Fund. For her philanthropic work, she has received dozen of awards that range from the Military Order of the Purple Heart Award to the Diamond Halo Award of Operation Moral Upgrade to the John F. Kennedy Memorial Award for her outstanding "service to God and Country."

Although known as the "First Lady of the American Theater,"

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Helen Hayes made more than a dozen films and appeared in a dozen more made-for-television movies. She won the Academy Award for Best Actress in 1932 for her lead in *The Sin of Madelon Claudet* (1931) and an Oscar for Best Supporting Actress in 1971, for her comedic efforts in *Airport* (1970). She was nominated for the Golden Globe for her role in *Herbie Rides Again* (1974) and twice won the Emmy for her work in television. She won the Tony three times for her performances on stage. She also won the Grammy in 1976 for Best Spoken Word Recording.

A devout Catholic all her long life, Hayes was schooled at Holy Cross and Sacred Heart academies in Washington, D.C. Although her mother pushed her onto the stage at the age of five, Hayes dreamed for a time of becoming a nun. As a successful actress, she supported several Catholic charities by word, deed, and money, and helped establish a Catholic orphanage in Mexico. In 1961, she was honored by the Spanish Order of St. Isabella the Catholic. In 1971, she received the Sisters of St. Joseph of Los Angeles Medal and, the next year, the St. Genesius Medal of the Santa Susanna Church in Rome. In 1973, she was awarded the Cardinal Gibbons Alumni Medal from the Catholic University of America and, in 1979, the Laetare Medal from Notre Dame. In 1985, she received the St. Clara Medal from Santa Clara University and, the next year, the Presidential Medal of Freedom from President Ronald Reagan in a ceremony at the White House. In 1988, the President honored her again with the National Medal of the Arts.

Hayes and her husband, Charles MacArthur, had no children of their own but adopted a son and a daughter. The son, James MacArthur, is best known for his role in the television series *Hawaii Five-O*. The daughter, an aspiring actress, died of polio at age 19 in 1949. Hayes became an active supporter of the March of Dimes and created the Mary MacArthur Fund to aid children stricken with polio. She persuaded Nyack Hospital in New York to establish the first treatment and therapy department for the paralyzed survivors of polio, and the hospital was later renamed the Helen Hayes MacArthur Hospital.

Like Helen Hayes, Jane Wyatt was a star on Broadway before she came to Hollywood in 1934 to play a supporting role in *One More River*, quickly followed by her first lead in *Great Expectations*. She starred again in *We're Only Human* (1936), but it was *Lost Horizon* (1937) that became a classic. Playing opposite Ronald Coleman and directed by Frank Capra, she contributed an excellent performance in the mythical tale of the journey to Shangri-La. Not finding any scripts that excited her, Wyatt spent the next three years on Broadway. She returned to Hollywood in 1940 to become one of the busiest actresses in the industry, making 21 films over the next 11 years and starring with Cary Grant in *None But the Lonely Heart* (1944), Dana Andrews in *Boomerang* (1947), Randolph Scott in *Canadian Pacific* (1948), Dick Powell in *Pitfall* (1948), and Gary Cooper in *Task Force* (1949).

Turning to television in 1952, Wyatt made several appearances in dramas before landing the part of the homemaking wife, Margaret Anderson, in the long-running series *Father Knows Best*. Criticized by many on the cultural left today, the series, Wyatt argued, upheld her Catholic virtues. "Just name them," she said, "they were all there: honesty, charity, family cooperation, respect for Dad. At the time, most other TV shows were making fun of Dad, but not ours." Critics rewarded her for her fine performances with three Emmys. She continued working in television after *Father Knows Best* went off the air in 1960, and she gained fame for a third time with the role of Amanda, the human mother of the Vulcan Mr. Spock, in *Star Trek*. She also made an appearance in the film *Star Trek IV: The Voyage Home* (1986). She says she is now recognized as Mr. Spock's mother by Trekkies around the world.

In years past, there were good numbers of actors in Hollywood who could rightly be described as practicing Christians. From the 1930's through the 1960's, there was a distinct and active Catholic community in Hollywood, and, while male stars played a role, it was their female counterparts who made the largest contribution.

Wyatt's mother was a member of the famous Van Rensselaer family and a convert to Catholicism. For many years, she was a drama critic for *Catholic World*, published by the Paulists. Wyatt was reared with a strong Catholic faith, and she did the same with her own children, educating sons Christopher and Michael at Catholic schools. She attended Mass regularly at St. Victor's in Hollywood and was one of the staunchest supporters of Fr. Patrick Peyton's Family Theater, dedicated to creating radio and television programming that encouraged family unity and prayer. She starred in eight of his radio dramas and appeared in several of his television shows. In 1997, she was honored by Fr. John Phalen, Peyton's successor, "for her witness, her greatness of heart and spirit, her saying yes to the powerful influence that her craft of acting could bring to the lives of thousands." When asked about her legacy, the star of motion pictures and television replied, "I would like to be remembered for my happy marriage and for my marvelous children."

The actors and, especially, the actresses who formed a robust and active Christian community in Hollywood are, for the most part, long gone. It would be easy to blame their departure and the failure to replace them on the entertainment industry itself, a putatively immoral or at least amoral business concerned only with profits. However, isn't this the nature of business in general, and hasn't it always been so? Then, too, Hollywood clearly attracts those people starved for approbation, affection, and adulation—and fame and wealth. Becoming a moral beacon for mankind is not their heart's desire. But that was the case in the golden era of the 1930's and 40's as surely as it is today. I cannot help but conclude that America has changed, that we once took our Christianity seriously, and that, therefore, many of the directors, actors, and actresses that we sent to Hollywood took their Faith seriously. Moreover, the movie moguls understood this and gave Americans what they demanded. I am afraid that they still do. Heaven help us. c

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The Cardinal Vicar

(With Apologies to Dostoyevsky and Nods to Jean Raspail and Monsignor Benson)

by Hugh Barbour, O.Praem.

"Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish . . . "

—Psalm 2:12

Twenty-one centuries will have passed since He promised to come in His glory, 21 centuries since His prophet wrote, "Behold, I come quickly." For centuries, then, men had beseeched Him with faith and fervor, "O Lord our God hasten Thy coming." And He in His infinite mercy will come down to them. And that is just what will happen, believe me; He will show Himself, if only for a moment, to His people.

My story takes place in Rome, in the grimmest days of the *fin de siècle* 2000's, when the European Union will have been moved there from Brussels after the declaration of *sharia* in Benelux and the setting up of cantons for E.U. citizens throughout the old Union in Western and Central Europe. In most of Italy, there was no immediate danger of this, as the emergency coalition government of the 30's (all the parties except the Christian Democrats and Islamists) had adopted a policy of massive immigration to Central and Southern Italy of East Timorese and Filipinos in order to avoid the fate of the now separate Islamic states in the north of the peninsula, united politically with the Albanian-run Islamic states of the Eastern Adriatic. Although North American President-for-Life Jenna Gonzales y Obama had threatened sanctions and even military intervention to prevent the massive movement, Beijing had made it clear that the removal of these Christian populations from its Southeast Asian provinces was most welcome, and that any American intervention would result in the revocation of the Alta California Accord of 2030, which had granted the state autonomy within China's Eastern Pacific Federation. The movement had been successful, and pansit and pasta were being served up in the once-deserted villages on the hillsides of Abruzzo. Rome had remained a Christian city, although not an Italian one, even if the cheerfully imitative Asians had quickly adopted a number of Italianisms, and the Italians, never very touchy about racial differences, had widely intermarried with the newcomers. Some wags from the remaining ethnic Italian population liked to suggest replacing the national anthem "*Fratelli d'Italia*" with the post-World War II Neapolitan jingle about the local children left behind by GIs: "*Si chiama Ciro, Ciro, Ciro / ma è nero, nero, nero*" ("His name is Jack, Jack, Jack / but he's black, black, black").

Of course, this will not be the Coming in which He has promised to appear in all His heavenly glory at the end of time, and which will be as sudden as a bolt of lightning cutting the sky from east to west. No, He will want to come only for a moment to visit His children when, throughout Europe, His sanctuaries, their refuge of olden days, will have been stripped, whitewashed, and reinhabited by strange gods.

In His infinite mercy, He will come among men in human form, just as He walked among them 21 centuries before. He will come down to the Eternal City the day after the World Day of Peace reinauguration of the old church of Santa Maria in Ara Coeli on the Capitoline as the congressional *aula* of the Union. The E.U. authorities will have obtained the church from the Vicariate of Rome, which, in the absence of the pope, had found it necessary to make whatever accommodations it could to the new bureaucracy that wanted to install itself on the Campidoglio.

The pope will have been in Moscow since 2070, when the cardinals were impeded from going to Rome for the election after the death of Gregory XVII, not being allowed to pass through Islamic airspace. They had to come individually, taking a western route over America and Asia, as the Russian government, with the consent of their patriarch and Holy Synod, had invited them to hold the conclave in the Kremlin. Many of the Sacred College had remained there indefinitely in quarters around the baroque St. Clement's in old Moscow. There were some Catholic faithful now in Russia—more, in fact, than ever before—since the offer of free land in the 50's and 60's had brought many traditionalist Europeans there from America and Western Europe. Many vast stretches that had been lying fallow and depopulated between the birch forests in the first decades of the century were now being cultivated by the new equivalents of the Volga Germans: Christian refugees with their numerous families. Out of deference to the sensibilities of the Orthodox, the much-contested Roman liturgical restoration of the 20's was observed exclusively, even by the prelates who had resisted it in their home countries. The Old and the Third Rome were thus united by mutual interest and goodwill, even if not by dogma. Only the remaining Poles in the cities insisted on maintaining the liturgy of the 1970's and kept insisting that the pope would do better to join the assortment of patriarchs living in Kiev, where even the patriarch of Constantinople had fled, claiming jurisdiction over the old Rus along with four others. On Latin Easter and Christmas, the patriarch graciously invited Pope Cyril and, later, his successor, Pope Methodius, to give his *Urbi et Orbi* from the St. Michael Gate of Red Square. Only those over 40 remembered the pope in Rome.

The E.U. authorities had agreed with the Vicariate of Rome—after some concerns were met about the presence of Christian symbols in their newly secularized meeting place—

Fr. Hugh is prior of St. Michael's Abbey in Trabuco Canyon, California. *The texts adapted from Dostoyevsky's* The Brothers Karamazov *have been taken from the Bantam Classic translation by Andrew R. MacAndrew.*

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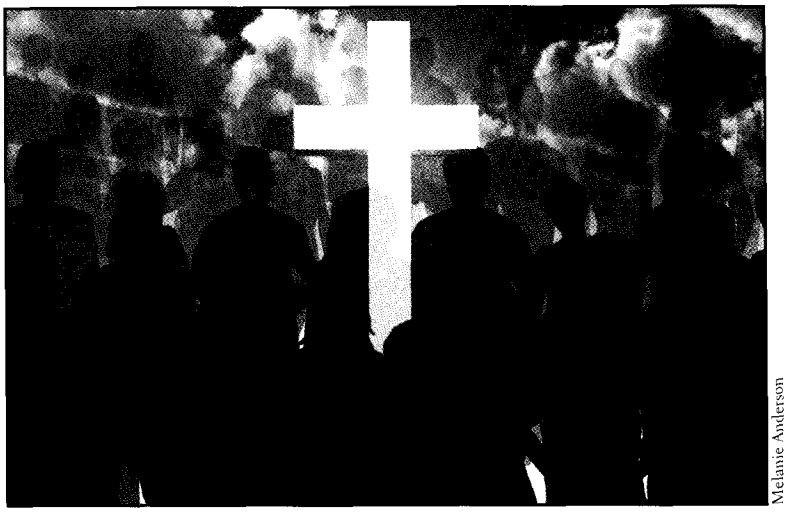
that, on account of the overwhelming popularity of the veneration of the Child Jesus among the Filipinos and Timorese (something they had in common with the old Italians), the traditional procession and blessing of the city with the image of the Santo Bambino of Ara Coeli would be permitted from December 25 to January 6 each year, as long as the image was not brought through the new *aula* but carried only outside at the *scalinata* in front of the closed doors. So it will be that, on January 2, the day after the World Day of Peace celebrations, the procession will halt at the top of the steps according to immemorial custom.



Melanie Anderson

There He will come, unobserved and moving about silently, but, strangely enough, those who will see Him will recognize Him at once. People will be drawn to Him by an irresistible force, gathering around Him, following Him, and soon, the whole crowd will be about Him. He will walk among them in silence, a gentle smile of infinite compassion on His lips and the sun of love burning in His heart. Light, understanding, and spiritual power will flow from His eyes and set people's hearts vibrating with love for Him. He will hold out His hands to them, blessing them, and just from touching Him or even His clothes will come a healing power. The people will keep saying, "It is He, He Himself, the Nazareno, the Santo Niño." The friar who had come out for the procession will look perplexed and frown.

Just at that moment, the Cardinal Vicar Cesare della Sentina and the E.U. president Isidore Soros will be watching from Michelangelo's piazza. There will be no need to confer or discuss what is to be done. A death-like silence will descend on the Capitoline as guards lay hands on Him and lead Him away. The compliant people will slowly depart, discretely whispering in Italo-Visayan about what they have seen.

The guards will take their Prisoner to a dark but well-known palazzo between the Pantheon and Piazza Navona. In the night, the door of His cell will open, and there will stand the Cardinal Vicar. "You? Is it really You?" Receiving no answer, he will continue in great haste: "You need not answer me. Say nothing. Besides, we all know well Your silence before Pilate. 'What is truth?' Now there's the question that puts You and him and Satan himself on the same side, and us on the other! What a disastrous claim You have made, 'I am the Truth'! Of what use was it for Satan to know who You are? 'If Thou be the Son of God,' indeed! Such preciosity, and at what expense for the millions who would come under the rule of men who believed Your promise, 'You shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free'? Your professed love for men, what has it gained them, since You put them under the burden of truth? Satan's hatred for You, what has it meant, except that, in order for him to draw them away from You, he must make them guilty of the truth and so capable of recognizing him for who he is? But we have loved men more than You ever will, and we have kept more from Satan's grasp, far more, than You ever will. When You come into Your kingdom, remember us, just a hundred thousand or so, all at Your left, when You turn to look at the hundreds of millions who will be at Your right, not, mind You, because of You, but because of us. Yes, sublime indifference, invincible ignorance, these have been our weapons against the madness of the truth. To be sure, You will forgive them, for, thanks to us and not to You, 'They know not what they do'! Yes, we will be lost, but the Devil will not be pleased with our company, since we do not share his aversion to You, since we are better than either of you. We have saved all we could from the intolerable and dangerous burden of truth. Not that it has been easy: it has taken four centuries of careful effort and planning. Equality, Reason, Progress, Democracy, Freedom, Inclusivity, Tolerance, Civil Rights, Global Solidarity, Security, Peace—anything but truth has been our motto, and we have succeeded on the whole. (There are certain sad exceptions here and there, like Your pope's prolific flock in Russia, or those pathetic Nigerians, but these only serve as a warning to our good people. How fortunate they are to have me as Your Vicar's vicar!) See how easily our faithful have accepted their fate! No one even thinks of defending the Faith, and even less of spreading it. The Islamists only make our point for us: Let our children convert and turn toward Mecca, it does not matter. They only prove that we Christians are not like them; we make no claims to recognition; we are just one voice, venerable, respected, chastened by our past errors in the symphonic dialogue of the New World Order. And no, we have not changed one iota of Your law and teaching; our personal orthodoxy may never be called into question; we would not be so stupid as to make the mistake of drawing attention to the truth by denying it: Leave that to the Jews. (How carefully we finessed their removal, and now, who remembers them? Just a handful left in America. I know this pains You greatly, but they were too risky to use for our cause, haunted by truth: You can have them all now, Your brethren! To think the bombs came from Sunni France, and not from Iran! *Vive la Résistance!*) We have found a better way: the way of love. How could You ever teach that love and truth are compatible? Truth defines and excludes; love includes all. Our damnation will be the triumph of servant-love, utterly humble and unrecognized, since You are surely not going to let Your happy elect in Heaven know to whom they really owe their bliss. This will be our satisfaction: We never taught them to hate You. You see how much You were loved today? And yet, tomorrow, they will have forgotten Your appearance. You can be sure there will be no record of it in the news: just another of the numerous apparitions that keep our good people harmlessly occupied. Now, have You nothing to say? Still playing the silent mystic?"

He will suddenly go over to the Cardinal Vicar and kiss him gently. The prelate will start and shudder. He will open the door: "Go now, and do not come back ever. You must never, never come again!" The kiss will glow in his heart, but the Cardinal will stick to his old ideal. c

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A Strategy to Quarantine the Violence in Iraq

Conferring for Peace

by Ted Galen Carpenter

President Bush's decision to send 21,500 additional troops to Iraq is a desperate attempt to salvage a mission that has gone terribly wrong. Instead of persisting in a strategy that will have U.S. forces trying to referee a multisided civil war, Washington should focus on a more achievable objective: working with Iraq's neighbors to quarantine the violence in that country as the United States adopts a strategy to withdraw all of her troops. If we do not take steps to do that soon, the conflict in Iraq could easily escalate into a Sunni-Shiite regional proxy war that would undermine U.S. policy throughout the Middle East. Equally troublesome, preventing such a horrific war is fast emerging as the principal argument that American hawks use to make their case that the United States needs to maintain a military presence in Iraq indefinitely.

Iraq's neighbors are already lining up on opposite sides of the internal sectarian struggle.

Predominantly Shiite Iran has taken a great interest in political and military developments in her western neighbor. Tehran has close ties with the two dominant Shiite political parties, Dawa and the Supreme Council for the Islamic Revolution in Iraq, and has supported the even more radical Muqtada al-Sadr. Washington has long accused Tehran of interfering in Iraq, especially by funding and arming Shiite militias, and Washington's warnings on that issue intensified markedly in January.

There is little doubt that Iran is determined to see a Shiite-controlled government in Baghdad and would react badly if it appeared that Iraq's Sunni minority might be poised to regain power and once again subjugate the Shiite majority. The current Iraqi government is quite friendly to Iran, and Tehran can be expected to take steps to protect the newfound influence it enjoys in Baghdad.

But Iraq's other neighbors are apprehensive (to put it mildly) about the specter of a Shiite-controlled Iraq. Saudi Arabia, in particular, regards the prospect of such a state on her northern border as anathema, worrying about the impact on her own Shiite minority–which is concentrated in the country's principal oil-producing region. The Saudis are complaining to Washington that a Shiite "state within a state" exists inside Iraq and that the development is extremely worrisome. There are indications that wealthy Saudis are already providing funds to Sunni forces in Iraq. (It should also be noted that the distinction between private money and government money among members of the Saudi ruling class is, at best, hazy.) In November 2006, the top security advisor to the Saudi regime, Nawaf Obaid, warned in the pages of the *Washington Post* that, if the United States did not take steps to protect the Sunni community in Iraq, Riyadh would intervene directly to do so. Although the Saudi government disavowed that statement and terminated its relationship with Obaid, it is hard to believe that he issued such a warning if discussions about that option had not been taking place among the political elite. A senior U.S. official told NBC News in mid-January that the Saudi government had informed Washington that it was prepared to move its own troops into Iraq if the new U.S. surge strategy failed and the violence in that country grew worse.

Other countries are also taking an active interest in developments in Iraq. Syria retains significant ties to Ba'athist elements in Iraq and has, at the very least, looked the other way as fighters and military hardware have passed through the Syrian border to support the insurgency in Iraq. Turkey has her own policy priority—namely, to prevent the emergence of an independent Kurdish republic in northern Iraq, a scenario that becomes much more likely if the rest of Iraq is engulfed in civil war.

A regional proxy war in Iraq would turn the Bush administration's mission there into even more of a debacle than it already is. Worse, Iraq's neighbors could be drawn in as direct participants in the fighting—a development that could create chaos throughout the Middle East. Washington needs to take steps now to try to head off those dangers.

The best approach would be for the United States to convene a regional conference that includes (at a minimum) Iran, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Jordan, and Turkey. The purpose of such a conference should be to make all parties confront the danger of the Iraqi turmoil mushrooming into a regional armed struggle that ultimately would not be in the best interests of any country involved. Washington should stress that Iran, Saudi Arabia, and Iraq's other neighbors risk having events spiral out of control if they do not quarantine the violence in Iraq. The U.S. goal should be a commitment by the neighboring states to refrain from meddling—or at least restrain the extent of meddling—in that country's sectarian strife.

Realism about the role of Iraq's neighbors, especially Iran and Syria, is essential. Tehran and Damascus are not about to help the United States out of her dilemmas in Iraq because of a spirit of altruism. They have no interest whatsoever in helping the United States achieve her political objective of creating a secular, democratic, pro-American Iraq. Indeed, both governments take a perverse pleasure in witnessing Washington's self-inflicted wounds. Our only feasible chance of gaining their cooperation is if we can convince them that overplaying their

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Ted Galen Carpenter, vice president for defense and foreign-policy studies at the Cato Institute, is the author of seven books on international affairs. He is also a coauthor of Exiting Iraq: Why the U.S. Must End the Military Occupation and Renew the War Against Al Qaeda *(2004).*

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hand may provoke direct intervention by the Saudis, Turks, and other rivals.

A regional conference must focus solely on preventing the violence in Iraq from spreading. It should not attempt to address such issues as the Iranian nuclear program, the Israeli-Palestinian dispute, or democratic reforms in the Middle East. Broadening the agenda is a recipe for failure.

Even with a restrained, limited agenda, there is no guarantee that a regional conference would be successful. All of Iraq's neighbors have significant incentives to try to prevent a victory by one Iraqi faction or another. The temptation to meddle, therefore, is powerful. Washington does have a few cards to play, however. U.S. leaders can make it clear to Turkey and Saudi Arabia that their close ties to the United States, which both countries value highly, will be at risk if they exacerbate the chaos in Iraq. Dealing with Iran and Syria requires the opposite approach. Washington should convey to both countries that reasonable restraint on their part will be rewarded with improved relations with the United States, including the restoration of economic ties.

The United States should convene a regional conference that includes (at a minimum) Iran, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Jordan, and Turkey. The purpose of such a conference should be to make all parties confront the danger of the Iraqi turmoil mushrooming into a regional armed struggle that ultimately would not be in the best interests of any country involved.

The Bush administration needs a healthy injection of realism to adopt a quarantine strategy. The goal of preventing civil war in Iraq is already lost, and maintaining a long-term U.S. military occupation to forestall a regional proxy war is far too high a price to pay, both in money spent and American lives sacrificed. Unfortunately, the specter of a wider war is the latest reason that the Bush administration is invoking to continue the military occupation of Iraq. That is a foolish and perilous course. Instead, we should make it clear to Baghdad and all other capitals in the region that the United States intends to withdraw her forces from Iraq and do so promptly. Enlisting Iraq's neighbors to contain the violence now and after the U.S. troops leave is the only feasible alternative to Washington continuing to play the futile role of armed babysitter.

A full-scale proxy war would be a calamity for the region and, given America's extensive involvement in that part of the world, a major headache for this country as well. We need an achievable, damage-limitation strategy—and soon. Moving to quarantine the Iraq civil war is that strategy. c

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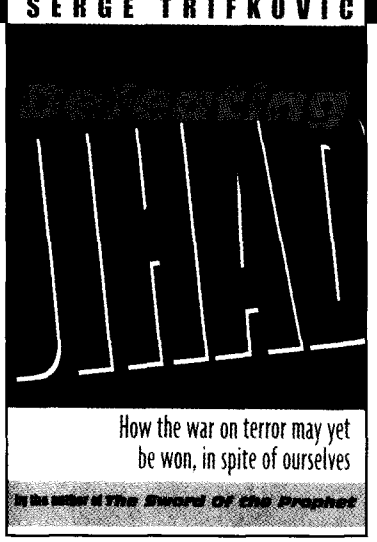

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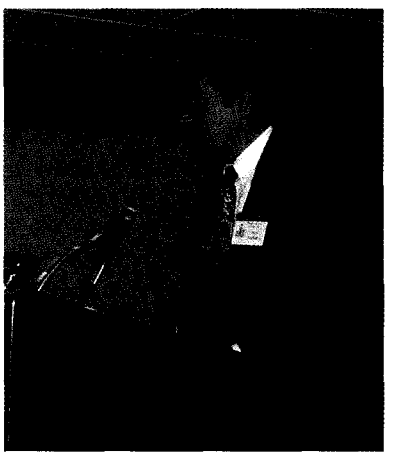

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The Politics of Life—and Politics

by Daniel McCarthy

"If a woman of her own accord drops that which is in her, they shall crucify her and not bury her."
—The Assyrian Code, c. 2000 B.C.

Unplugged: Reclaiming Our Right to Die in America
by William H. Colby
New York: Amacom; 272 pp., $24.95

How the Pro-Choice Movement Saved America: Freedom, Politics, and the War on Sex
by Cristina Page
New York: Basic Books; 236 pp., $24.00

The Party of Death: The Democrats, the Media, the Courts, and the Disregard for Human Life
by Ramesh Ponnuru
Washington, D.C.: Regnery Publishing, Inc.; 303 pp., $27.95

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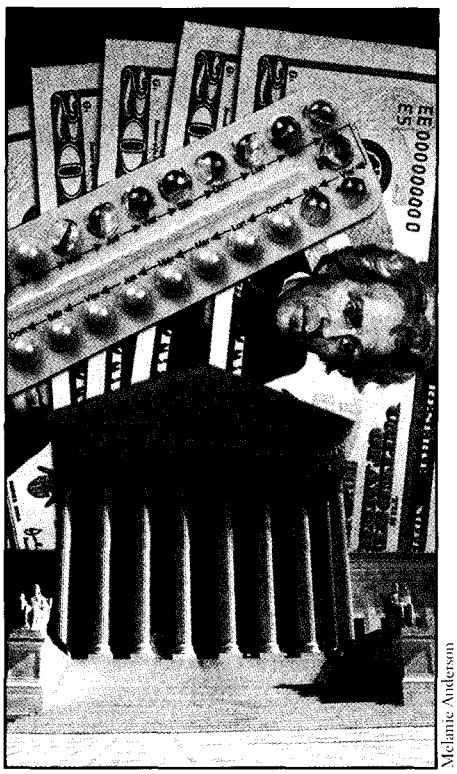

Melanie Anderson

Ancient history is worth keeping in mind when confronting the claims of the pro- and anti-abortion and euthanasia camps, since both tend to couch their arguments in terms of abstract universal human rights, rather than appeal to tradition, faith, and history.

The Greeks and Romans, who believed that a father should decide whether to admit a newborn child into his family, were not "pro-choice," any more than Jews and Christians were "pro-life." Nothing like individual rights, one way or the other, entered the picture. Nor was infant exposure—thinkers such as Epictetus notwithstanding—primarily a philosophical question. The practice, or the abhorrence of it, derived from ancient tradition and was but one facet of a larger way of life.

What was true of infanticide was broadly true of ancient opinion about abortion and suicide as well. The Hippocratic Oath, with its injunctions against physicians assisting in suicide or providing a pessary or other means of abortion, did not reflect the prevailing ethos. In *Roe* v. *Wade*, Justice Blackmun was at least correct when he wrote, "Greek and Roman law afforded little protection to the unborn," while "with the end of antiquity a decided change took place. Resistance against suicide and against abortion became common"—under Christianity.

History is not Ramesh Ponnuru's strong suit. There are scant citations within *The Party of Death* from any authority older (or wiser) than Immanuel Kant. Theology is not his strong suit, either: Last year, Ponnuru told *Doublethink* (in the words of profiler Jason Mattera) that "he doesn't understand the proscription of homosexual conduct in Scripture." As Ponnuru is a political journalist, he has turned to a guru, Princeton legal scholar Robert P. George, for philosophical instruction.

The ideology Ponnuru derives from George and a handful of other sources is a mixture of tautology and egalitarianism. "The argument for the sanctity of life is straightforward. If human beings have intrinsic dignity and worth, then they have this dignity and worth simply because they are human beings," he writes.

> These rights—and to have any rights at all must be to have the right not to be killed—cannot depend on particular qualities that some human beings have and others do not. They cannot depend on race, or age, or sex; nor can they depend on stage of development or condition of dependency.

If they do, "the notion that all human beings are created equal becomes a self-evident lie." Ideological democracy is at stake: *Roe*, Ponnuru tells us,

> violates the principle of human equality that is the moral basis for democratic self-government, and specifically for American democracy. . . . Other countries have grounded freedom and equality in the requirements of social peace; America has grounded them in those of moral truth ("We hold these truths . . . ").

Ponnuru's rights theory leads directly

Daniel McCarthy is a contributing editor to the American Conservative.

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to absurdities. If "to have any rights at all must be to have the right not to be killed," does it follow that a condemned prisoner has no rights at all? Ponnuru opposes capital punishment (as do I), but that hardly resolves the problem. Does a soldier—let's suppose he is a volunteer, fighting in a just war—have a right not to be killed, and does his government commit an injustice by jeopardizing that right in sending him to fight? If the soldier has surrendered his right not to be killed, has he thereby surrendered all his other rights as well?

Even more risible than the implications of Ponnuru's rights theory are its foundations: There are none—besides the consequentialist claim (feeble even so far as those go) that, if we believe we can make distinctions about which humans deserve certain rights, then "the notion that all human beings are created equal becomes a self-evident lie." We may not like the idea that the words of the Declaration of Independence are untrue, and such a view might not be popular, but none of that tells us anything about whether people actually are "created equal" and possess certain universal rights from conception on.

Ponnuru's approach throughout *The Party of Death* is dry, coldly rationalistic, and abstract—qualities that led his *National Review* colleague John Derbyshire to call his ideology a "frigid and pitiless dogma." Undercutting his own method of argument, Ponnuru acknowledges that the most effective anti-abortion messages have been those that are the most emotional. Ultrasound images have made the humanity of life in the womb (at least past the earliest stages of development) difficult for even some abortion-rights advocates to deny; the Arthur S. DeMoss Foundation's feel-good *Life: What a Beautiful Choice* television campaign cut into support for abortion in the polls and sent NARAL into a panic; and partial-birth abortion graphically demonstrated the violence of killing the unborn. Such emotional appeals are limited, but not nearly so limited as the ersatz rationalism of *The Party of Death*.

The book, not surprisingly, is a partisan tract. The author rakes over the coals the usual (and eminently deserving) suspects: the Democrats, the courts, the liberal media; but he fails to take a serious look at the iniquities of the Republican Party. It was a Republican-majority Supreme Court, after all, that gave us *Roe*, and a Republican-majority Supreme Court has affirmed it ever since. Had Ponnuru wanted to advance the political fortunes of the pro-life movement, he would have targeted Republicans as well (why not start with Giuliani, or perhaps a good look at the real Mitt Romney?), since they actually have something to fear from pro-life voters. Pro-lifers have no leverage in the Democratic Party; if they were willing to fight, they might have some in the GOP. Ponnuru and his ilk, however, have kept them focused elsewhere. His choice of subject matter follows the same logic. Abortion, euthanasia, Terri Schiavo, and embryonic stem cells are all issues that bind short-sighted pro-lifers to the Republican Party; as such, they are suitable topics for Ponnuru. The death penalty and just war (Ponnuru has all along been a booster for the war in Iraq), on the other hand, are not so good for the GOP—so they are ignored.

Ponnuru's admirers have insisted that *The Party of Death* is essential reading for pro-lifers. There is little in the book, however, that has not been said before. Did you know, for example, that *Doe* v. *Bolton* effectively legalized even the third-trimester abortions *Roe* claimed could be prohibited by state law, by defining a woman's "health" so broadly as to make most restrictions meaningless? Yes, you probably did, if you have paid any attention to the abortion wars that have been waged over the last three decades—if, say, you have ever read an issue of the *Human Life Review*. Not everyone has, of course, but how many Americans who have not already made up their minds about abortion are going to read *The Party of Death*?

The pro-abortion side produces some deeply unconvincing literature of its own, including Cristina Page's *How the Pro-Choice Movement Saved America*. Four years ago, Page, who works for the New York chapter of NARAL Pro-Choice America, coauthored an op-ed in the *New York Times* with a pro-life woman. What could two women on opposite sides of the abortion divide find to unite them? In this case, it was their agreement that health-insurance companies should be legally compelled to provide contraception. Page was astonished at the negative reaction to this proposal from pro-lifers, and that astonishment motivated her to write this book. Despite the title, Page has little to say about the pro-choice movement, or even abortion. She does, however, underscore something about the real character of the pro-choice movement—it's not just about abortion, nor even abortion and contraception, but about taxpayer-funded and government-mandated provision of those things. The pro-choice movement is a socialist movement. Most of the examples Page gives of pro-life assaults on the availability of condoms or birth-control pills involve pro-lifers defeating efforts to provide those things for Third World countries at the expense of U.S. taxpayers, or to force American insurance companies to include birth-control pills in their coverage. If birth control isn't free, America isn't free, or so it seems for Page.

Page does not like "conscience laws" protecting the jobs of pharmacists (and others) who refuse to sell "morning-after" contraception or other birth-control pills. Such laws arise not from pro-life Christians' opposition to contraception—there are no conscience laws that apply to the refusal to sell condoms—but from their opposition to abortion: They fear that the morning-after pills (which are typically a larger than normal dosage of standard birth-control pills) or other kinds of hormonal contraception will act as abortifacients, causing the death of fertilized eggs either by preventing implantation in the womb or by causing implanted eggs to abort. Against that belief, Page cites a study by the *American Journal of Obstetrics and Gynecology* that found "no direct evidence exists showing that implantation is prevented by progestin-only methods." But even if the study is mistaken, Page's grievance is legitimate: No sales clerk or pharmacist has any kind of a "right" to veto his employer's policies and frustrate a customer. If an employee really thinks something sold by his employer is unconscionable, he should simply quit. If we choose to go down the road of "conscience laws," we will likely see legislation enacted to protect the supermarket jobs of Muslim checkout clerks who refuse to let customers buy bacon.

Page, like Ponnuru, frequently fails to realize how the things she reports in her book undercut her argument. Is the pro-life movement really in a position to turn back the clock on the availability of contraception in the United States, as Page warns, when (as she writes) 85 percent of self-described American Catholics believe they should be allowed to practice artificial birth control, and "82 percent of all American women born since 1945 have used the Pill"? What exactly does Page think anticontraception pro-lifers can achieve? It's hard to imagine that Page believes her own claims.

She, like Ponnuru, has difficulty com-

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ing up with an argument for her position on abortion. One might wonder whether her relentless focus on contraception suggests an unwillingness, as well as an inability, to defend a woman's right to kill her child *in utero*. Alas, no: It turns out that, unlike Ponnuru, who stays away from hard cases and uncomfortable conclusions in his book, Page is willing to defend her position *in extremis*. Abortion is fine by her, even in such cases as that of the Michigan boy who beat his girlfriend's stomach with a baseball bat—with her permission—over the course of weeks in order to induce miscarriage. Page blames such barbarities on a dearth of available information about legal abortion.

Unlike the first two books considered here, William H. Colby's *Unplugged: Reclaiming Our Right to Die in America* is better than expected. The title gives the impression that the book is a brief for euthanasia or, at the very least, an impassioned argument for terminating life support for the terminally ill, or permanently comatose or vegetative. That impression is reinforced by a look at Colby's background as a lawyer who represented the Cruzan family of Missouri in their efforts to end the tube-feeding of their comatose daughter, Nancy. The Cruzan case ultimately went to the U.S. Supreme Court in 1990 and helped establish the so-called right to die.

Although Colby does not conceal his own opinions about Terri Schiavo, Nancy Cruzan, and similar cases, *Unplugged* is not about a right to die and has little to say about euthanasia. Colby's goal is to convince the reader to devise a document granting "durable health care power of attorney" to a spouse, parent, or other relative or friend. Who wouldn't prefer to have an immediate family member making decisions about life-support for him rather than leaving those decisions to courts, legislatures, or—as in the case of Terri Schiavo—the likes of Randall Terry and Jesse Jackson?

Colby devotes his first three chapters to a dispassionate, factual account of the Terri Schiavo story: what happened to her; how her case wound through various courts (of public opinion as well as law); and what measures other branches of the Florida and federal governments took to intervene. He follows those chapters with accounts of other life-support cases—Quinlan, Cruzan, Busalacchi (Colby was involved in the latter two)—and a handful of historical vignettes about the development of resuscitation and life-prolonging technologies. Later chapters examine the "institutional glide path" of hospitals in dealing with end of life (or end of brain function) cases and the alternatives that hospice treatment can provide.

His chapter on feeding tubes tries to examine why, culturally and emotionally, artificial nutrition is different from other forms of life support—why, for example, patients removed from feeding tubes are said to be starved when no one says that patients removed from dialysis are poisoned or that patients taken off of ventilators are asphyxiated. (Technically, all of those descriptions are accurate.) People who believe that providing the irrecoverably comatose or vegetative with nutrition is categorically different from providing them with air will not approve of Colby's approach, even as painstakingly neutral as he tries to be.

One important question that receives little consideration in *Unplugged*—and which is, admittedly, a question that even the best medical minds in the country may not be able to answer definitively—is just how much brain function is necessary for a person to be capable of consciousness. The matter is not directly relevant to Colby's work, since he makes it clear that he supports terminating life support for conscious patients in some cases. (He says that, should he be struck by Alzheimer's and become demented to the point where he no longer eats, he does not want to be tube fed.) Consciousness was one of the issues at stake—morally, if not legally—in the Terri Schiavo case, however, and it is something that many of Colby's readers will probably wonder about. Most prolifers, at least those with any knowledge of biology, will not object to terminating life support for the brain dead. Medically speaking, a person without brain activity is not brain dead. A body in which only the brain stem functions, however, most certainly is mentally dead.

How the Pro-Choice Movement Saved America and *The Party of Death* are preoccupied with spurious rights and imagined threats—and, ultimately, with political power. Neither of those books addresses the way people really live their lives or how communities, and shared values, come into existence. Colby's book, on the other hand, does connect to reality, not by trying to persuade readers to particular existential or ideological views, but by providing a sensible bit of legal advice useful to latter-day Christians and non-Christians alike. ✠

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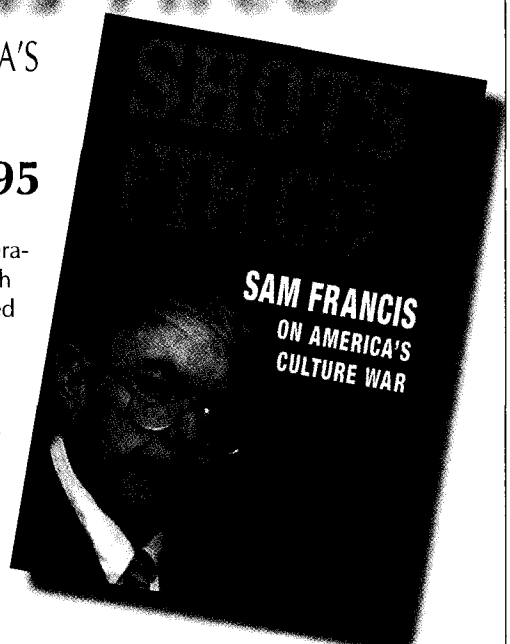

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The Greatest Revolution

by Tobias J. Lanz

Food Is Different: Why We Must Get the WTO Out of Agriculture
by Peter M. Rosset
New York: Zed Books; 163 pp., $17.50

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Most people throughout the industrial world see cheap and readily available food as simply another modern amenity, such as electricity or running water. Few understand that agriculture has always been political, because it is tied to human survival. Even fewer know that the world is currently undergoing one of the greatest agrarian revolutions in history: one in which small farmers, *en masse*, are being driven out of business and off the land by large farmers and agribusiness, creating widespread political, economic, cultural, and environmental chaos.

The instruments of this revolution include the World Trade Organization (WTO), regional trading agreements such as NAFTA, and the European Union. These promote international agricultural trade over domestic agricultural equity and stability. Up until the early 1990's, almost all governments followed supply-management policies that kept agricultural prices high through price supports, set-asides, and loans. These policies were never perfect, but they allowed small farms to thrive and helped stabilize rural societies—always an important political goal, especially in developing countries with large and impoverished rural populations.

These policies began to change with globalization. Large producers and their host countries—namely, the United States and the European Union—began aggressively to promote policies that increased supplies to lower prices, thus making them competitive on the world market. They used the WTO and other international agreements to gain access to world markets and force governments to change their agricultural policies to accommodate free trade. As a result, trade barriers have fallen, the volume of global trade has risen, and large farmers and agribusinesses are making record profits. But this rapid policy shift has devastated small farmers and rural communities throughout the world.

Free-market advocates see these changes as simply another consequence of competition and a movement toward greater market efficiency. But this is a false understanding. These new agricultural policies and trade agreements have shifted government support away from the small to the large producers. One such policy in the United States is direct payment to farmers for lost income resulting from falling prices. This compensation barely covers production costs, forcing many smaller producers out of business. Large producers can still make hefty profits because of their greater economies of scale. They also receive the bulk of income subsidies. In 2003, the wealthiest one percent of American farmers received an average of $215,000 per year, compared with under $9,000 per farmer for the poorest 80 percent.

As farm incomes dwindle, more farmers go out of business. (Two thousand went under in Europe every week from 1995 to 2000, and farm foreclosures are at all-time highs in America.) Lower farm profits also reduce land prices, so even when small farmers want to cash out of farming, they lose. Naturally, large farmers buy up cheaper land, which only increases their control over production and supply and their market power.

These changes in agricultural policy have had an even greater impact at the international level. Because of massive subsidies, large firms can sell their goods on the world market at up to 60 percent below production costs. Even Third World peasants, with far lower land and labor costs, cannot compete with this "free trade" onslaught. These firms (hardly farms) are dumping their excess production on world markets. In Third World countries, the social consequences are worse than in America or E.U. countries, because there are no economic alternatives for poor peasants who lose their farms. They flood into already overcrowded cities or enter international immigration streams (legal or illegal).

Peter Rosset, an agronomist and food activist, has spent years working in rural Mexico, where he has seen the effects of free-trade policies firsthand. Because of her proximity to the United States and the warm relations between Mexican and American government and corporate elites, Mexico has borne the brunt of this global revolution. Over one million farmers have been forced out of business over the last decade, and countless millions have left the countryside for the cities, or the United States, for good. Many send money back home to support their family farms so they can stay in business. These laborers are subsidizing their Mexican farms with money made in America, where the government subsidizes the big businesses that destroyed Mexican farms in the first place.

Agriculture is the last economy being transformed by industrialization and commercialization, and Rosset argues that this should not happen. Food production differs from other forms of production because it is so closely linked to human health and survival. In addition to providing nourishment, a stable food economy sustains social and political stability in rural areas and preserves cultural traditions and the environment. Rosset argues that food is more than a commodity; it is the foundation of a complex web of social and ecological relationships that are simplified and ultimately destroyed when big businesses (and big government) reduce agriculture to mere production for the market.

Rosset's goal is food sovereignty, which would be based on creating government programs and markets that support small producers and rural communities over the interests of big corporations. With the right policies, small producers can provide stable food supplies at reasonable prices and higher quality than large producers can. Rosset realizes that subsidies are viewed with suspicion in America and Europe. However, he explains, some type of government support is necessary in agriculture more than in any other economic sector, given the inherent risks involved. The real question is, Who benefits from these policies? Rosset argues convincingly that policies that support small farmers are most critical in restoring equity and stability in agrarian economies the world over.

Rosset discusses the social, cultural, and environmental benefits of local food economies. He fails, however, to address the significance of sound food economies to national security: Local and regional agriculture reduces risks to food supplies. Food is now grown far from its ultimate place of consumption. Most food consumed by Americans travels over a thousand miles to its final destination, making it vulnerable to war, disease, natural disasters, economic downturns, and even terrorism.

Rosset explains well the technical aspects of agricultural policy and global

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trading arrangements, but his book's real significance lies in revealing the massive destruction wrought by the global neoliberal trading regime and the powers behind it. Its main weakness is its failure to go beyond policy prescription as a means of change. Rosset does not discuss the role of consumers and investors, especially in the industrial nations, in driving corporate and government policies. The demand for cheap and abundant food maintains their hegemony over the food economy. Rosset also fails to recognize the spiritual nature of food and agriculture. In all healthy societies, food, like sex, is respected because it is essential to life. As such, food production and consumption are enshrined in rituals and customs that celebrate human participation in the life cycle. When food, or sex, is removed from the protection of the community and given over to the domain of government and the market, it loses its spiritual value and becomes a purely material good.

The Southern Agrarians and others such as Wendell Berry have defended the centrality of farming to a good and orderly society. Culture and agriculture are inseparable; when one declines, so does the other. The only way to slow the process of disintegration is to support policies that make small-scale farming viable again. Consumers and investors can do their part by supporting, whenever possible, local farmers over those of distant states or countries. If enough people become aware of the high social costs of cheap food, the gargantuan forces of globalization can at least be kept at bay, and maybe—someday—even forced to retreat.

Unfortunately, conservatives, like most Americans, do not view food and agriculture as important political issues. What is more disturbing is that the political left does. Leftists are the ones taking up the fight for small farmers and communities throughout the world. The left-leaning publisher of this tract, Zed Books, has published an entire series on agricultural issues. Even in my home state of South Carolina, which is purportedly conservative Christian and agrarian, the Democratic challenger for agricultural commissioner, who advocated family farming and food security against industrial agriculture, was handily defeated by the Republican incumbent, one of the state's largest and wealthiest farmers.

The worst long-term consequence of the current agricultural revolution is that, if a counterrevolution ever materializes, it will probably be a leftist operation, allowing the left to monopolize the debate over how to protect agriculture and community life. In accomplishing this, the left will penetrate the last bastion of traditional life and transform it into a radical one. That would be the greatest revolution of all.

Tobias J. Lanz teaches politics at the University of South Carolina, Columbia.

The Gospel That Nobody Knows

by John Willson

The Gettysburg Gospel: The Lincoln Speech That Nobody Knows
by Gabor Boritt
New York: Simon & Schuster; 402 pp., $28.00

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"Out of the sacred space the sacred text would grow," says Mr. Boritt. He's right; those of us who grew up as Yankees know in our bones that our country is sacred ground. I took my wife to Gettysburg on our honeymoon. My uncle Joe (a federal judge appointed by Eisenhower) made a pilgrimage there almost every year and took delight in correcting the guides. I grew up in a little Finger Lakes town where, every Memorial Day, the president of our senior class recited the Gettysburg Address in the cemetery where dozens of our Civil War veterans rest in peace.

That said, I remember a graduate-school classmate telling me about his interview with a CIA psychiatrist who accused him, "You are ambivalent about the Soviet Union." Well, I'm ambivalent about Abraham Lincoln. Almost nobody is ambivalent about Father Abraham.

Gabor Boritt is a good historian, which means that he tries to tell the truth from the record that presents itself in the sources we have available, adding in an informed imagination based on many years of reading and teaching and thinking about things that are, in the end, mysteries. Mr. Boritt is also a gentleman. He is respectful of the people he writes about, a careful guardian of their integrities, yet not afraid to reveal untruths where he finds them. For example, he doesn't for a minute portray Lincoln as a Christian; those who wish to "baptize him posthumously" must realize that it is all a part of the mythology that transformed him into Father Abraham.

Mr. Boritt also plays down the effect of the Gettysburg Address—at least in the short run. It has been granted, he says, "miraculous powers—'the words that remade America.' Yet the words do not do that. How could a speech do that, especially one that was not heard distinctly in its own day?" This softens Harry Jaffa, who believes that Lincoln completed the American Revolution, and Garry Wills, who says that Lincoln "refounded" the United States. But—and this will be disappointing to some readers—Mr. Boritt does not take them on. One expects Mr. Boritt, as the long-standing director of the Civil War Institute at Gettysburg College, to be, in the end, both politically judicious toward his fellow Lincoln scholars and unambivalent about his subject.

The book is fortunately titled and unfortunately subtitled. The speech has indeed become secular gospel, but insofar as "nobody knows" it, that's just a matter of the incidental misconception that Lincoln wrote it on an envelope on his train trip to Gettysburg. That piece of sentimental nonsense Mr. Boritt takes care of completely, but it has very little to do with the significance of what Lincoln said. The "nobody knows" theme has become a cottage industry in Lincoln scholarship. Progressives like to find mystery where there is no mystery: To parody Dr. Johnson, perhaps complexity is the last resort of the scoundrel. My ambivalence about Lincoln has nothing to do with his complexity; it has to do with his very human transparency. Lincoln said what he meant, even if, in the Gettysburg Address, he left his words hovering somewhere in never-never land, something like what Thomas Jefferson did when he wrote the (uncontroversial, in his own day) preamble to the Declaration of Independence.

Here's the virtue of Mr. Boritt's book, and it's a big one: He puts the Gettysburg Address in the narrative context of the battle, the town, the graveyard, the ceremony, and its sanctification. Nobody with less than Mr. Boritt's experience, his unique position in Gettysburg, or his judicious temperament could have pulled off a book this informative and this enjoyable. In the end, he buys the whole Lincoln package: "[H]e would fight in the best tradition of humanity, struggle as counseled in the Western world by

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St. Augustine of Hippo in fourth-century North Africa, with mercy in his heart." And, concerning Governor Pataki's reading of the Gettysburg Address at the September 11 memorial service in New York, Mr. Boritt's solemn judgment is that "People who listen understand. Americans are saying, this is who we are."

He's not ambivalent. Mr. Boritt does not hide Lincoln's racism (Can't we do away with that? Weren't many Southern heroes also hypocrites and sinners?) or his politically inspired loose play with the Constitution. He even hints that Lincoln may have given his black friend and servant, William Johnson, the smallpox that killed him. Characteristically, Lincoln had Johnson buried in Arlington National Cemetery, which had recently been created from the confiscated land of Robert E. Lee. Lincoln paid for the burial himself and had Johnson's stone marked "Citizen." I think the confiscation and the burial, juxtaposed, qualify for "ambivalence." It's a metaphor for a deeply flawed, deeply decent man.

The address itself, the "Gettysburg Gospel," wasn't quite a gospel in 1863, or even in 1890. The most interesting feature of Mr. Boritt's book is his description of how it became a gospel. "Among the reasons for the emergence of Lincoln as a national symbol and the rise to prominence of the Gettysburg Address," he writes,

> were the abandonment of Reconstruction and the need to find a substitute for the Emancipation Proclamation; the growth of a more modern language; the need to Americanize immigrants; and, above all, the democratizing of Progressive politics.

Mr. Boritt approves of this process, just as Garry Wills approves of Lincoln's "giant (if benign) swindle" in misrepresenting the entire history of the United States up to his presidency, and Harry Jaffa approves of what he sees as Lincoln's rhetoric completing the Declaration of Independence. The problem with all this is that it reduces the United States to an idea, and reduces that idea to a talented, eloquent, ambitious, driven, flawed, sinful man.

A President who could drive the puritanical Salmon P. Chase out of Cabinet meetings by telling dirty jokes can't be all bad; and one whose intellectual makeup is close to Theodore Parker, Ralph Waldo Emerson, and the other Transcendentalists (as Garry Wills persuasively shows) can't be all good. Mr. Boritt describes a Lincoln who genuinely grieved for the 51,000 Americans who fell on the slaughter fields of Gettysburg; but neither he nor any other of the thousands of writers who praise or condemn the Civil War have got into the heart of a man who was willing to preside over and prosecute a war that left almost 650,000 Americans dead. By next spring, the war in Iraq will have gone on for about as long as the Civil War. In proportion, about 5,200,000 Americans would have died, had Mr. Lincoln's War been fought in the 21st century. And for what?

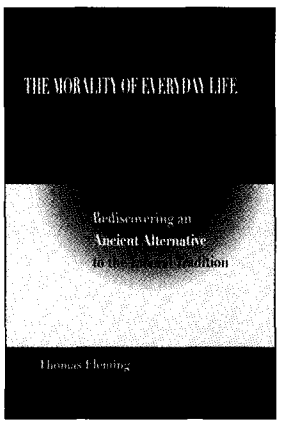
Mr. Boritt shows (although he doesn't disapprove) that the Gettysburg Address assumed its gospel status exactly as the Progressives were rewriting our history to save us all through Big Government. And, as Mr. Boritt says, "If in the 1860s the United States was to save the world by saving the democratic example at home through force of arms, in 1917 it would do the same by sending those arms abroad." In general, the "Progressive movement, striving for the common man, for democratization, turned the Gettysburg Address into a manifesto." Thus, what was meant as "a war speech" became a 272-word set

The Morality of Everyday Life:
Rediscovering an Ancient Alternative to the Liberal Tradition

by Thomas Fleming

What passes for conservatism today is really nothing more than the impossible moral and social theories of the Renaissance and Enlightenment, in which universal abstractions, such as democracy and equality, are presented as hard truths, when, in fact, they have never existed in any society in human history. Nonetheless, they are to be applied worldwide, at the tip of a spear (or cruise missile) if necessary.

Dr. Fleming's alternative is rooted in "everyday life," the local realities of blood and soil, custom and tradition, friendship and faith, and in the wisdom born of the experiences these realities beget. This wisdom finds expression in folktales and fables, in ancient Hebrew Scriptures and Greek philosophy, and in medieval casuistry. It is the method to solving ethical problems great and small, and it is the method that undergirds authentic conservatism.



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piece for a progressive ideology. In Wilson's hands, and in FDR's, that ideology became the foundation for empire.

Garry Wills, Mr. Boritt, and Harry Jaffa all agree that the Gettysburg Address "is the consummate epitome of a quarter-century of Lincoln's thought and expression." One does not have to be an unambivalent admirer of Lincoln to realize the brilliance of his rhetorical achievement on that November day in 1863. As Mr. Wills writes, "A nation born of an idea finds that idea life-giving," so those of us who appreciate the power of words also can understand the sustaining power of the Progressive ideology. Reading Lincoln as I have for over 50 years, and reading Mr. Boritt's very fine book, I'm not at all sure that Lincoln intended to bequeath to us this ideology; but, in what our Progressives have made of the sacred text, he did.

On our next honeymoon, I think I'll take my wife to Chickamauga. Three Willson brothers fought there, came home safely, and never were Progressives.

John Willson is a professor emeritus of history at Hillsdale College.

The Springtime That Wasn't

by James Vogel

Beyond Vatican II: The Church at a New Crossroads
by Fr. Claude Barthe
Fort Collins, CO: Roman Catholic Books; 159 pp., $19.95

◆

The Second Vatican Council (1962-65) was arguably the most significant event in the Catholic Church in the 20th century. No other issue has had such wide-ranging effects on Catholics throughout the world, and none (excepting, perhaps, contraception) is debated with as much vigor among Catholics today, more than 40 years later. Although it was the 21st ecumenical council in the history of the Church, Vatican II was only the fourth in the past 500 years. More importantly, it remains unique in the sense that no doctrinal definitions or condemnations were issued by this council. As Paul VI, who was Pope at the close of the council, said, "it had avoided proclaiming in an extraordinary manner dogmas affected by the mark of infallibility."

What, then, did this council do? It produced 16 documents stating the Church's position on various issues, ranging from the nature of the Church and the role of the laity to the reform of the liturgy. Certain principles were enunciated that seemed to contradict earlier Church teaching, such as those concerning religious liberty and ecumenism. Some bishops formed a bloc to counter what they saw as liberal trends at the council, the product of *la nouvelle théologie*. At the head of this group (the Coetus Internationalis Patrum) was Archbishop Marcel Lefebvre, then superior general of the Holy Ghost Fathers, the largest Catholic missionary order in the world. In 1970, he would found a new religious order dedicated to preserving the traditions and practices of the Church before Vatican II: the Society of St. Pius X.

The SSPX was founded to maintain a traditional scholastic formation for the clergy, although it was to become better known for its exclusive use of the Tridentine Mass and its principled opposition to what its leaders saw as the novelties of the Second Vatican Council. These perceived novelties continue to be a subject of debate in Catholic circles, with many Catholics arguing that a revolutionary "spirit of Vatican II" obscured the true meaning of the council, while some on the fringe reject the council outright and, often, the Church with it. Fr. Claude Barthe, the author of *Beyond Vatican II: The Church at a New Crossroads*, is a former member of the SSPX. In an attempt to reconcile varying views on the Second Vatican Council, he has written a brief but concise study that analyzes the council and the application of its reforms, especially under Popes John Paul II and Benedict XVI.

Fr. Barthe begins with a consideration of modernity, and especially of the democratizing element in ecclesiastical affairs. The debate over the liturgy of the Catholic Church in the Roman Rite, the Mass celebrated by the vast majority of Catholics worldwide, offers perhaps the most public exhibit of this democratization. Although Pope Benedict XVI seems in favor of a more widespread celebration of the ancient Roman Mass (commonly known as the Tridentine Mass or the Mass of St. Pius V), many bishops, most notably in France, are opposed. Fr. Barthe uses their resistance to bolster his argument that democracy (under the guise of "collegiality") has weakened the understanding of authority inside the Church. The crisis in the Catholic Church today is undoubtedly one of authority. Fr. Barthe notes the grave decline in vocations, belief, and Catholic practice since the council and argues that the *aggiornamento*, the opening to the world proclaimed by Blessed John XXIII, has taken its toll on the Catholic faithful.

In a chapter dedicated to the question of married clergy in the Western Church, Father Barthe considers the efforts of liberal pressure groups since the close of the council to effect a change in ecclesiastical discipline. Since the issue is not one of dogma, and because of the serious decrease in priestly vocations, Fr. Barthe suggests that a success on this point would amount to a great modernist victory, similar in impact to that of the institution of seminaries following the Council of Trent.

According to Fr. Barthe, the majority of Catholics fall into two broad camps: a "center-left" or conciliar party, which seeks to further the reforms inaugurated in the Church since 1965, and a "center-right" party, which defends a "true" interpretation of the council, a reform of the reform, and which argues that much of the recent devolution springs from an aberrant interpretation of conciliar documents. These two camps do not include the "extreme left" (the "Trotskyites of the Church") or the "extreme right" (traditionalist Catholics).

Forty years ago, Fr. Ratzinger was one of the *periti* (experts) at Vatican II and worked with such liberal "reformers" as Fr. Edward Schillebeeckx and Karl Rahner. Today, as Pope Benedict XVI, how does he view the council?

A clue to the Pope's comprehension of the issue may be found in his 2005 Christmas address to the curia, the papal court. (The entire speech is printed as an Appendix to this book.) "No one," Pope Benedict argues, "can deny that in vast areas of the Church, the implementation of the Council has been somewhat difficult." The Holy Father then observes that two varying interpretations of Vatican II have developed over the past 40 years: "the hermeneutic of discontinuity and rupture" and "the hermeneutic of reform." Of the former, he says:

> The hermeneutic of discontinuity risks ending in a split between the

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pre-conciliar Church and the post-conciliar Church. It asserts that the texts of the Council as such do not yet express the true spirit of the Council. It claims that they are the result of compromises in which, to reach unanimity, it was found necessary to keep and reconfirm many old things that are now pointless.

Such language is striking, to say the least. Some writers have argued that quotations such as this indicate that the Pope has taken traditionalist critiques into account. The Holy Father adds, however, that "the hermeneutic of reform . . . bore and is bearing fruit." Thus, Benedict XVI falls into the "center-right" camp, desiring to place Vatican II in conformity with the Tradition of the Church, while evincing a willingness to condemn certain modernist excesses.

Fr. Barthe believes that the ascension of Benedict XVI to the Throne of Peter "inaugurates . . . a phase of transition for the Church, that is to say, a process of exiting from the atypical state in which this Council had placed Her." The speech to the curia in December 2005 signaled what could be the beginning of a sincere and candid debate regarding the council, one in which Fr. Barthe hopes a "common front" can be constructed from those on the "center-right" and the traditionalists.

The question of religious liberty has been, and will likely continue to be, the most contested subject. Blessed Pius IX, in *Quanta Cura* (1864), condemned the proposition that "liberty of conscience and worship is each man's personal right" as "insanity." Yet *Dignitatis Humanae*, the most controversial of all the documents of Vatican II, states that "The Vatican Council declares that the human person has a right to religious freedom." While *Dignitatis Humanae* does note that this understanding of religious freedom "leaves untouched traditional Catholic doctrine on the moral duty of men and societies toward the true religion and toward the one Church of Christ," there does seem to be some tension between it and *Quanta Cura*. As this issue touches on doctrine, a definite answer must be given. Over the past 40 years, volumes have been written on this subject, and it is certainly beyond the scope of this review to summarize the arguments of both sides. Suffice it to say that this change, whether in principle or in emphasis, has led to a disastrous change in policy on the part of the Church: Since 1970, Rome has gone so far as to request Catholic countries such as Colombia, Spain, and Portugal to modify their Concordats so as to incarnate the new emphasis on religious liberty.

Fr. Barthe aptly subtitled his book "The Church at a New Crossroads." With Benedict XVI now steering the Barque of Peter, optimistic expectations regarding both a broader permission of the traditional Latin Mass and fresh discussion of the principles and merits of the Second Vatican Council seem justified. *Beyond Vatican II*, while stopping short of suggesting concrete solutions, is a good introduction to the root problems the Church must address. Fr. Barthe's closing assessment is worth noting: If the doctrinal and liturgical divisions are not addressed under this pontificate, the Church will likely continue in a "process of auto-destruction," as Paul VI called it. If they are addressed, then—*Deo volente*—we may soon witness the shoots of the promised springtime that, so far, has failed to appear.

James Vogel is the assistant editor of the Angelus, *the monthly magazine of the Society of St. Pius X.*

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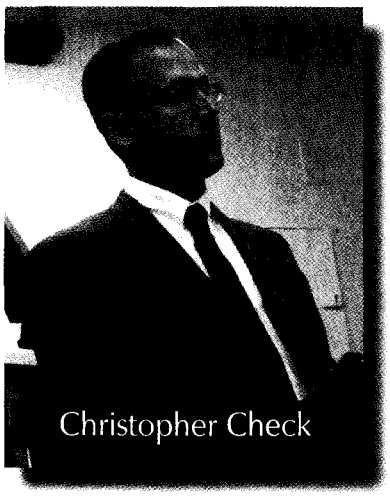

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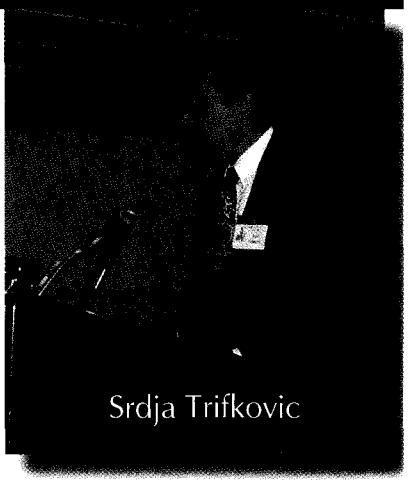

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by Philip Jenkins

The Next Militia Panic

Only a fool would try to foretell the course of U.S. politics a few months in advance, let alone several years in the future. The fact that Democrats are riding high after their electoral triumph last November does not necessarily mean that they will win the White House in 2008. But just suppose that January 2009 opens with a new Democratic president. What can we predict about that new regime, and what, if anything, can we do right now to prepare for those events?

I would suggest one near certainty: Around 2010-11, the United States will be facing a florid national panic over right-wing militias, paramilitary groups, and domestic terrorists. Such a prediction extrapolates plausibly from American political history over the past century. Whenever a long-established Republican regime is replaced by a liberal Democratic successor, concern about rightist militias and paramilitaries normally surfaces within two or three years, especially when the nation faces grave external dangers.

Such a sequence has occurred repeatedly. In the mid-1930's, the extreme-right mobilization took the form of "shirt" groups inspired by Italian or German fascism, movements such as the Silver Shirts, the German-American Bund, and the Christian Front. Two years after JFK stole the presidency, the media were presenting dire warnings about the Minutemen, ultrarightists who reputedly had close ties with the military. The first Clinton term was marked by a national scare over militias and assorted Patriot groups, such as the common-law courts. That particular concern peaked after the Oklahoma City bombing, and, through the late 1990's, the neo-Nazi terrorist became a staple villain of films and television series.

It is not too difficult to understand why rightists and conservatives should feel deeply nervous about such a transition of power, and bitter electoral conflicts regularly produce charges that a new regime might betray the nation to her external foes. FDR recognized the Soviet Union; JFK apparently betrayed the Cuban anticommunists; and Clinton—well, Clinton was Clinton. Paramilitary movements are deeply rooted in American history and political culture, since long before the time of the original Minutemen, and so are ideas of resistance to government. In areas of the Northwest, for instance, we easily trace a continuity over decades and generations, as former Silver Shirts became Minutemen leaders, and their sons and grandsons led militias and organized common-law courts.

A similar pattern might very well recur, particularly if a Democratic administration were seen as being soft on terrorism and Islamic dangers—if, for instance, the new political order severely restricted the right to hold and interrogate terrorist suspects. We can only hope that the next Democratic president will be a profoundly religious person: She—or, conceivably, he—will have to pray every night that another September 11 does not occur on the Democratic watch, or the political consequences will be frightful. The spur to militia organization would be all the greater if any new attack could plausibly be connected to failures of immigration control—if, for instance, terrorist cells entered the country *via* Mexico. Any linkage between the issues of terrorism and immigration would be deadly dangerous for liberals.

Rightist paramilitary movements are authentically a feature of the U.S. political landscape; but so are politically induced panics that vastly exaggerate the scale and danger of such groups. Such panics are invaluable in tainting mainstream conservatives, by falsely linking them to violence or racist extremism. If communists are undermined by Red Scares, then the right has repeatedly been subjected to Brown Scares, in which activists are linked to terrorists and foreign spies. FDR succeeded superbly in manipulating publicity about the domestic far right of his day to present all opponents as Nazi stooges, awaiting their opportunity to stage a *putsch* in Washington. And his efforts paid rich dividends in promoting the U.S. entry to war: Who, apart from Nazi puppets, could conceivably oppose his policies? In their respective eras, JFK, LBJ, and Clinton all painted conservatives as crypto-extremists. Barry Goldwater, of course, was a threat to liberty because he was somehow affiliated with Birchers and the even darker paramilitary forces further to the right. In the 1990's, the post-Oklahoma City militia scare contributed mightily to winning Clinton his second term.

Conspiracy paranoia about the far right is thoroughly embedded in the DNA of the American left, and that quality is greatly magnified by the contemporary culture of blogging and the internet. Just think of the September 11 conspiracy theorists, who see the World Trade Center attacks as a modern-day Reichstag Fire.

We can also predict how these revived militias will be treated by the media. Fed constant stories by the White House and by activist groups, television programs will soon be telling us incessantly about the vast networks of racists and antisemites endangering this country. I would like, here and now, to patent the label "The American Al Qaeda," which should be entering circulation ere too long. Does the Southern Poverty Law Center already have its antimilitia jeremiads drafted?

Adding to the combustible political mix would be a type of individual who will shortly be receiving disproportionate attention—namely, the angry and disaffected Iraq War veteran determined to avenge the betrayal of his cause and his comrades in Baghdad. All good Brown Scares need to imagine trained berserkers willing to undertake the wishes of the vast right-wing conspiracy.

Once the conspiracy theory is in place, it can be used to discredit any conservative cause or movement, from opposition to immigration to support for gun-owners' rights. This time, though, one thing will be different: The Justice Department will have at its disposal all the antiterrorist and antisubversive laws passed to combat Islamic terrorism, and it will have no hesitation about deploying them against domestic opposition. Generally, the situation for civil liberties looks alarming. Fortunately, though, I am just a fool. C

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by Scott P. Richert

Immanentizing the Eschaton

Around this time every year, I find myself in the strange circumstance of writing a column before Ash Wednesday that won't appear until after Easter Sunday. If the overarching theme of my column were something other than Rockford as a microcosm of America, this situation might not seem so odd. Every year, however, I'm haunted by the thought that Rockford is stuck in a perpetual Lent—moving always toward some glorious resolution that will change the shape of life here, but never quite arriving.

Take, for instance, the Rockford school-desegregation lawsuit, on which more than a few words have been spilled in these pages, starting with Tom Fleming's classic February 1997 *Perspective*, "Here Come the Judge." Five years ago, those of us who had fought to end federal judicial tyranny over Rockford School District 205 could see the light at the end of the tunnel. After 13 years and a third of a billion dollars in wasted property taxes, the Seventh Circuit Court of Appeals had ordered federal control to end on June 30, 2002.

And it did. But not much really changed. Today, the school district's property-tax levy is as high as it was before the lawsuit ended; its budget is higher; and, in these days of high gas prices and immoral wars for control of foreign oil, hundreds of buses still crisscross the city every morning and afternoon, breaking up families and neighborhoods and taking children of all ages far from their homes.

Before June 30, 2002, the busing program was known as Controlled Choice; now that it is no longer being ordered by a federal court but imposed willingly by the school district, it is called Choice Advantage. At least Controlled Choice was a more honest, less Orwellian term.

Once again, however, the people that have walked in darkness have seen a great light. This fall, Controlled, er, Choice Advantage will come to an end, and the district will assign students to schools based on "attendance zones"—in other words, based on where they live.

That doesn't mean that busing will come to an end. After months of drawing and redrawing, the attendance zones are as gerrymandered as a Massachusetts congressional district. The liberal solution of racial quotas has been replaced by the neoconservative one of socioeconomic balance—which, in practical terms, is simply a way of recategorizing poor whites as minorities so that the school district can obscure the fact that it's still engaged in social engineering.

Set aside the problem of getting a child from his home in the head of the salamander to his assigned school in the tail. Even if the zones were entirely based on natural boundaries and obvious physical divisions in the district, busing wouldn't go away. District 205 sprawls over 170 square miles, yet there are only six attendance zones for middle school, which puts their average size over 28 square miles—clearly not a reasonable distance for a child to walk to school. For high school, there are only four—an average size of 42.5 square miles. The entire city of Milwaukee takes up 45 square miles.

So the answer is obvious, right? The school district should simply increase the number of attendance zones (which would, incidentally, require abandoning the socioeconomic factor in determining the boundaries) and return to a system of neighborhood schools. There might be some outcry from those who supported "Choice," whether controlled or advantageous, but clearly this is the only workable solution that reduces busing to an absolute minimum and replaces social engineering with the education of children as the primary purpose of the school district.

Except that, as matters stand today, it simply cannot happen. The most obvious reason is that there is always someone waiting in the wings, ready to file a class-action lawsuit and plunge Rockford back into the nightmare of judicial tyranny. As long as that sword of Damocles hangs over the district's head, some "balancing"—whether racial or socioeconomic—will always be expedient.

There's a bigger problem, however, and in this, as in so many other things, Rockford is hardly unique. There simply aren't enough neighborhood schools in District 205 to handle the close to 30,000 students enrolled in the district. Some of this infrastructure was destroyed as a result of the desegregation lawsuit, as schools were consolidated to help achieve racial balance and others were simply closed to make room for court-ordered "magnet" schools. But most of the smaller schools that once existed inside the district's boundaries disappeared long before the lawsuit was filed, victims of the century-long push for school consolidation.

A 30,000-student, 170-square-mile monstrosity such as District 205 doesn't emerge, full grown, from the prairie soil. It took time and planning to bring us to this point, and what did we get for it? The school-desegregation lawsuit.

Without consolidation, the lawsuit simply could not have occurred. The immediate cause of the lawsuit was the closing of West High School, whose student population was about 40-percent black. That was only the latest in a string of school closings, however, that resulted in disproportionate busing of West Side students to East Side schools. (That the federal court's solution to forced busing was more forced busing was an irony lost on the advocates of the lawsuit.)

The only way to restore and safeguard a neighborhood-school system is deconsolidation, pulling District 205 apart, piece by piece, until we can restore a human scale to public education. Unfortunately, deconsolidation is forbidden under Illinois law; a school district can break into smaller parts only if those parts each unite with an existing district.

Deconsolidation would require changing this absurd law, and here, the size of District 205 might work to its advantage. If the superintendent and the board were to lobby the Illinois legislature, they might actually get a hearing. That, however, assumes that the district leadership has a desire to deconsolidate, and there's no indication that they do.

And so, for the rest of us, the light grows dim once again, and our long Lenten journey continues. ◦c

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Letter From Europe

by Paul Belien

Feeding the Beast

◆

When Angela Merkel became chancellor of Germany in late 2005, the conservative German newspaper *Die Welt* admitted that "Nobody knows in what direction she will take the country." The liberal *Berliner Zeitung* was equally ignorant, wondering, "What will she be demanding from us citizens?" (In Europe, we have "democracies" of the kind in which politicians get elected without anyone knowing what they stand for.) Labeled "*das Mädchen*" ("the girl") by Helmut Kohl and Gerhard Schröder, her two predecessors, Merkel had ambition and shrewdness that everyone had clearly underestimated.

Today, thanks to her efforts to hasten the transformation of Europe into the Middle East, it is clear that Merkel, the first woman to hold the highest political office in Berlin—and, for the first half of 2007, the president of the European Union—is steering the Federal Republic of Germany and the rest of "democratic" Europe in a direction the people do not want.

Germany is one of the six founding members of the European Union—the supranational organization that was established exactly half a century ago under the pretext that the economies of France and Germany should be integrated to prevent the two countries from going to war again, as they had three times in the previous century. Economic policies would no longer be decided in national capitals but by an unaccountable supranational executive, the European Commission, based in Brussels. At the time of the establishment of the European Economic Community (as the European Union was originally called), Clement Attlee, the perceptive British Labour prime minister, said that he did not want to have anything to do with this institution, which he called "a body appointed by no-one and responsible to no-one."

From the beginning, the EEC was a dangerous construct. It did not take long for the idea to arise among the Brussels bureaucracy to develop the institution into a genuine superstate—an imperial Moloch on par with Russia and America. Today, the European Union—sometimes referred to as the "Lambermonster" (after the Lambermont Building in Brussels, where the Commission has its headquarters) or the EUSSR (a name coined by the former Soviet dissident Vladimir Bukovsky, who knows a dictatorship when he sees one)—is interfering ever more with the daily lives of its subjects. At the same time, its territory continues to expand, from the original 6 members to the present 27. Empires have to keep growing to avoid unraveling, and, in so doing, they inevitably become increasingly totalitarian and expansionist.

By definition, there is no end to this process. The Leviathan must grow; the Lambermonster has to be fed. Meanwhile, its servants conceal from the people how big the monster has already become. The European Commission's website claims it has a staff of 25,000. Recently, Open Europe (OE), a London-based think tank, discovered that the total of those employed by the Brussels executive is actually more than 54,000. An OE spokeswoman said:

> The EU discreetly publishes a Statistical Bulletin listing staff levels at its agencies, but when we contacted these agencies directly we found they had far more staff than listed. Many of the agencies took months to answer requests. One, the European Police College, repeatedly refused to disclose its staff numbers.

The OE also discovered that the European Union's *acquis communautaire*—the body of E.U. legislation with which European citizens, companies, and charities have to comply—totals 170,000 pages. Officially, the total is around 80,000 pages. By adding up pages in the many volumes of the *Official Journal of the European Union*, the OE found that the European Union has passed 666,879 pages of laws since 1957.

With the accession of Rumania and Bulgaria on January 1, the E.U. territory has reached the outer boundaries of the European continent. Now, to continue expanding, it has to move into Asia and Africa. The preparation for this crossing of the Rubicon—in this case, the crossing of the Strait of Gibraltar and the Bosporus—has been going on for years. Five years ago, Louis Michel (then the Belgian minister of foreign affairs and presently a member of the European Commission) told the Belgian Parliament that the European Union will eventually encompass the entire Mediterranean basin, including North Africa and the Middle East. He also suggested that peace will come to Israel and Palestine only by incorporating both into the European Union.

The European-Mediterranean ("Euro-Med") partnership between the European Union and the countries of the Maghreb (an Arab word meaning "the West" and denoting Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, and Libya—the North African Muslim countries to the west of Egypt) was established specifically to promote the economic, cultural, and political integration of the European Union and the Maghreb countries. The Brussels bureaucrats think that the Maghreb will eventually become part of Europe, but, as many ordinary Europeans realize, Europe is on its way to becoming the Maghreb, the Muslim "West."

The 2006 Euro-Med "Algiers Declaration for a Shared Vision of the Future" (February 26, 2006) states that "It is essential to create a Euro-Mediterranean entity founded on Universal Values which are the basis for promoting political reform and common action plans." It also emphasizes that "it is crucial to positively [*sic*] emphasise all common cultural heritage, even if marginalised or forgotten" and that it is essential to "enhance the circulation of people and ideas." Euro-Med has also suggested rewriting European history books to make them friendlier toward Islam and to combat "Islamophobia," because "the Islamic component is an integral part of Europe's diversity."

Brussels needs to embrace Islam if it wants to expand into the Muslim east and south. The latter ambition also explains why the E.U. establishment considers it so important to get Turkey accepted as a member. Turkey would become the European Union's most populous member state. By virtue of her 80 million inhabitants—almost all of them Muslims—Turkey would also have the largest number

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of representatives in the European Parliament.

The problem, however, is that the present institutional framework of the European Union, dating back to the mid-1980's, is not adapted to the rapid expansion it has seen since the fall of the Iron Curtain in the late 80's. Since 2004 alone, 12 new members have been added. To cope with this expansion, the E.U. establishment produced the European Constitutional Treaty (the so-called European Constitution), a bloated 70,000-word document full of politically correct phrases yet carefully devoid of any reference to Europe's Christian heritage and cultural tradition. It expands the powers of the Brussels Eurocracy and limits the national sovereignty of the member states.

According to the present rules, all the member states have to ratify the constitution in order for it to take effect. If a single one fails to ratify, the entire project is waylaid. In early 2005, the constitution was rejected in referenda in France and the Netherlands. One reason people voted against it was their opposition to the admission of Turkey into the European Union. Theoretically, the constitution should have been discarded after its rejection in the French and Dutch referenda. It was clear from the start, however, that the European politicians would not take the electorate's "no" for an answer. Instead, they were waiting for a forceful figure who would take steps to impose the constitution against the people's wishes. This is where Angela Merkel comes in.

Merkel was always very clear about her intention to use Germany's six months at the helm of the rotating E.U. presidency, in the first half of 2007, to revive the ratification of the constitution. On January 17, in her first speech to the European Parliament as E.U. president, she presented the rest of Europe with a German *Diktat*. "The reflection pause is over," Merkel said.

> By June, we must reach a decision on what to do with the constitution. It is in the interest of Europe, its member states and its citizens, to bring this process to a successful conclusion by the next European Parliament elections in early 2009.

She added that it would be an "historic failure" to miss this deadline.

The way forward, she declared, was not to launch a public debate on the constitution but to focus on confidential, secret talks with national governments. "Broad general debate is behind us," she said, adding that she does not want further referenda on the treaty and noting that the European Union could not enlarge further without a constitution.

During the campaign for this month's French presidential elections, Merkel's Ribbentrop (Frank-Walter Steinmeier, the German foreign minister) warned the French politicians not to derail Merkel's plan to relaunch the constitution by using the subject as an election issue. "It would be good if in countries where elections are due the EU constitution does not become a central topic where firm political positions are taken," Steinmeier said.

By June, Merkel hopes to submit a revised constitution, which the national parliaments of the E.U. member states could ratify without consulting the electorate directly. Merkel, according to her spokesman Thomas Steg, intends to buy the good wishes of the people by adding a "social protocol" to the constitution that would "make it more acceptable to French and Dutch public opinion."

It is generally assumed by the European establishment that the opponents of the constitution are an unnatural alliance of the "far left" and the "far right." The right opposes granting Turkey E.U. membership and dislikes the idea of a federal pan-European superstate; the left fears that the constitution will lead to more economic liberalization and diminish the "social protection" provided by the national welfare systems.

Chancellor Merkel hopes to persuade voters that the European Union will provide at least as many welfare benefits as the national states it intends to supplant. There is "no time" to rewrite the text of the constitution fundamentally, Steg insisted, but the constitution would be expanded with a declaration on "the social dimension of Europe," which would oblige member states to take more notice of the "social consequences" of Internal Market legislation. This would serve as a check on E.U. legislation that opens up the protectionist Western European labor markets to workers from Central and Eastern Europe (the so-called Polish plumbers). Hence, the German chancellor hopes to fool the Europeans into letting the Turks (and, later, the North Africans) in by promising to keep the Poles out. Merkel is confident that the Europeans, who have already signed away so many of their freedoms in return for welfare benefits from the state, will buy this trick, too.

Paul Belien is the author, most recently, of A Throne in Brussels.

Nicholas Garrie

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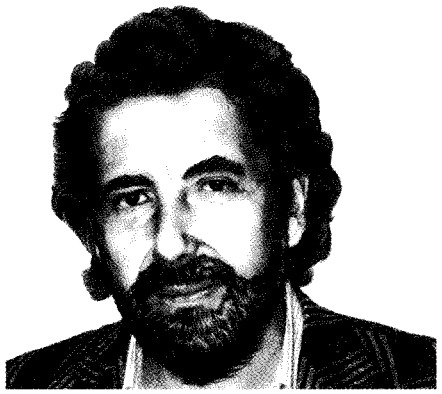
by Andrei Navrozov

Café Society



On the pavement flank of the café, my field of vision was being traversed, with the quiescent regularity of Attic horsemen galloping along the circumference of a drinking vessel, by strange women. Making their way up the Fulham Road, past the famous cinema, some of them moved in little groupings, like schools of gamboling goldfish; others singly and proudly, their hyperbolic determination a figure of Leibnizian optimism. It was now lunchtime, and some plaintive notes of the Pied Piper of Hamelin seemed to hang on the sweaty air, not least because the exodus along the pavement resembled the ordered swarm of jet-black bodies sprouting rats' tails in the musicians' scores, when, high up in a box at the theater, one peers through binoculars at the rickety stands in the magically illuminated orchestra pit.

Out of what fairy-tale woodwork had they come? All round lay the chalky white houses and the privately green squares of Chelsea, a honeycomb arrangement of such regular form it could not but oppress the eye corrupted by continental diversity. Such was the heritage of the Industrial Revolution. All round lay workers' housing; whether built for lords or for grocers, it was utterly devoid of both princely caprice and commonplace individuality, so that the poorer houses differed from the richer ones in size alone, grandness being understood as a quality of mass, strictly quantitative and positional. But even the mass itself was meager by continental standards, a typical house of five stories anywhere in the Royal Borough easily fitting into a modest Roman apartment, to say nothing of a patrician palazzo in a provincial town. Seldom glimpsed around these parts, the occasional Georgian edifice came as a nostalgic shock, a keyhole revelation of the aristocratic boldness so greedily imagined by every descendant of regicides who sports a tartan.

On the inside, the workers' houses were beset by mildew and woodworm, ravaged by rising damp, eroded by slovenly maids; while the workers were at work, deep in the bottomless shafts of investment banks, down in the money quarries, in the murky recesses of industriousness of every description; their children not heard, either by insouciantly auricled, musically impaired *au pairs* or by truant immigrant nannies; their grown daughters, and sometimes their still younger wives, out shopping. That is, parading unescorted through the city's main thoroughfares in pursuit of the emotionally desired yet culturally unattainable.

Here, beauty did not tarry indoors. I remembered how I used to watch neatly aproned workmen repair the fences separating house from pavement, anchoring cast-iron bars in molten tin—then the red lead, then the gray weatherproofing, then the lustrous black of the final coat—while, inside the houses, faucets dripped and bathroom carpets quietly rotted. Here, the funhouse was all on the outside; honor and filth shut up within, in mournful solicitude; whoredom and beauty, in a gay symbiosis, out and about. It was their midday promenade up the Fulham Road that I was now observing, as they emerged from side streets that bore the forgotten names of dispossessed noblemen, from the decrepit woodwork of a deeply alienated city, from the interstices in the fabric of a society built on the dream of squaring the circle.

There were the two kinds in curiously unequal proportions, the virtuous and the venal: the virtuous molding themselves after their workingmen, that is to say, their husbands or fathers; the venal emulating these men's mistresses. The first kind was desiccated, bloodless; the second, animated, fully charged, as if after a massive transfusion of the bank blood they had commandeered from the first by superior force. The former looked like they had cancer; the latter, in such ostentatiously good health that it seemed as though really and truly all the workers of the world had united in the unexpected aim of feeding and clothing, massaging and mollycoddling, amusing and possibly even adoring them.

Naturally, it was specimens of the latter kind that intruded most forcefully on my field of vision. Whose mistresses were they? Whose wives or daughters? They sped past, to fall back once again upon an imprecisely dated image, like Greek triremes, propelled by rhythmic strokes from invisible oarsmen snug in their holds; dynamic constituents of a victorious fleet that evoked the nation's naval past and mocked its heroes; stilted pedestrians possessed of a winged dexterity of movement that would have shamed at least the lazier among zephyrs. Their venality lately engorged with the sales of midsummer, what they offered to the eye was an untold wealth of attributes, freshly enhanced or newly acquired, which was now displayed with the meticulousness associated with museum exhibitions, or operating theaters, or table settings in great though not necessarily hospitable houses.

Thus the undulation of silk, for instance, had been pressed into service to suggest a gentleness of character, to which a crisp sense of humor, represented by the slightly giddy *petit pois* with which the fabric had been printed, was doubtless a desirable supplement; heels had been worn to sound an alarum in the passerby's soul, hinting at an unbridled cruelty that would seek fulfilment in passion, while at the same time restraining the malfeasant and throwing her, like a missing chattel restored to the lawful owner, upon the tender mercy of her victim; pursed like the plumpest of lips, handbags had been shaped with the care that the 18th century lavished on sentiment, with the result that at last they had come to resemble the alleged organs of sentiment, down to their elaborate fastenings, more ornamental than functional.

In a few months' time, the scene would change with the season, as oleaginous silk and ironically egalitarian cotton gave way to cunning mink and sparkly tweed, ushering in a new set of visual and tangible symbols; yet there was little doubt that, in their turn, these would again serve to represent, counterfeit, or dramatize these same totemic attributes, again to the audience's imperfect though perennially consuming satisfaction. To a culture deeply incriminated in lovelessness, these women's things were the artful accessories. C

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by Srdja Trifkovic

A Tale of Two Cabals

Imagine yourself at a fashionable party, a century ago, in Belgravia, the Upper East Side, or the Ballplatz. After-dinner brandy is served, Augustas are lit, and the talk turns to world affairs. The host asks his guests what they deem to be the issue that threatens peace and stability more than any other.

A senior official mentions the perennial Franco-German enmity; an admiral sees the danger in the Anglo-German naval race; a banker is worried about Japan's further ambitions after her victory over Russia; a diplomat warns of the ever-present possibility of some damn nonsense in the Balkans . . .

It is your turn, and—while confessing indecision on the most pressing issue of the day—you opine that, a hundred years hence, "the Middle . . . er, the Near East will preoccupy the nations of the civilized world more than any other region. Over a hundred thousand American soldiers, supported by some British auxiliaries, will be bogged down in Mesopotamia, and thousands will be killed. Further east, many regiments of Germans, Canadians, Poles, Czechs, and others will be helping Americans prop up the ruler in Kabul. The French will patrol the Litani—oh, it's a river between Sidon and Palestine, you see . . ."

By now, the respectful silence of those present has turned cold. Quick glances are exchanged, throats are cleared, but you are on a roll: "Persia will challenge us all, with audacity and apparent impunity, by striving to acquire weapons of unimaginable destructive power. In Palestine, Jews and Arabs will fight endless wars—of great bloodshed, sometimes, and attrition, always. Coarse Arabian princes from the desert will command riches that would put any Rothschild to shame and use them to build countless mosques in our cities and to buy our politicians and our businesses. The followers of Mahomet will slay thousands of us—there will be dreadful carnage in New York, London, Madrid, and Moscow—but that will not stop millions more from coming, settling in our lands, and treating them as their own. In France, more people will pray in mosques on Fridays than in churches on Sundays. In the meantime, our rulers will insist on bringing more of them in, while proclaiming all the while that their faith is really noble and peaceful, and . . ."

At this point, the host feels obliged to interrupt you. "Well, thank goodness now I know you are joking. For a moment, I thought you were serious, old boy, which would have meant either that you'd had too much of my Old Pale, or that you've gone stark raving mad. But this vision of mosques and Mohammedan carnage, and in the streets of New York, of all places . . . ha ha, that's colossal, you rascal, you almost had me fooled!"

The other guests, visibly relieved that the outburst of eccentric frivolity is over, join in the laughter, and the conversation gets serious once again: Heligoland, three-year conscription in France, the dreadnoughts, Bosnia, the Bosphorus . . .

Today, however, in 2007, we need to ask, *Are we mad, or drunk?*

We must be both, or else an unpleasant and treacherous part of the world would not have been allowed to command our attention, dominate our lives, and even threaten our very survival, the way it does today.

The strange obsession with the Middle East encapsulates much of what is wrong with America's foreign-policymaking on both sides of the dominant duopoly in Washington. At its poles, there may be differences over tactics and means, but the alleged necessity of America's continued, open-ended commitment is never questioned.

Superficially, the madness is fueled by greed; but, of all prerequisites for the development of a sane foreign policy, radically reducing and gradually ending our unnecessary and pernicious dependence on foreign oil would be the easiest to achieve. A deeper malaise is at work. The real madness is an amorphous beast with many names—multiculturalism, one-worldism, tolerantism, inclusivism, antidiscriminationism—that demands engagement abroad and wide-open doors at home.

Both abroad and at home, the impulse is neurotic; its justification, gnostic. It reflects the collective loss of nerve, faith, and identity of a diseased society, producing a self-destructive malaise that is literally unprecedented in history.

The intoxication is the arrogant belief, in general, that our reason and our science and our technology can resolve all the dilemmas and challenges of our existence, and, in particular, that enlightened abstractions—democracy, human rights, free markets—can be spread across the world and are capable of transforming it in a way that would ultimately turn Yusufs into Joes (which is what they all want, we are assured, or would choose only if they could think clearly).

Both the madness and the intoxication have a "left," essentially Wilsonian, narrative (one-world, postnational, compassionate, multilateralist, therapeutic) and a "right," or neoconservative, one (democracy-exporting, interventionist, monopolar, boastfully self-aggrandizing). The former is embodied in Al Gore and the Council on Foreign Relations here, the European Union and Prince Charles abroad, and George Soros everywhere. The latter has Leo Strauss as its prophet, "democratic capitalism" as its guiding principle, and Iraq as a tangible fruit of its benevolent global hegemony.

Though differing in practice, both outlooks are utopian and firmly rooted in the legacy of the Enlightenment and the rejection of any power independent of "the market" and the ostensible will of the multitude. Both hold that Man is naturally good and improvable, that human conflict is unnatural and vanquishable, that chaos and bloodshed around the world are primarily the fruits of some flawed policies of the West (Wilsonians) or the result of our insufficient "engagement" (neoconservatives).

The former find remedies in endless self-examination, in the supranational mechanisms of "collective security" controlled by themselves, and in the promotion of "dialogue" with every Third World tyrant and madman, for as long as he de-

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clares a grievance against us. The latter rely on the use of force to impose their benevolent global order on a supposedly grateful pre-postmodern humanity. Both are determined to make the world as they want it to be rather than to deal with the world as it is. This produces policies that are invariably flawed, often evil, and occasionally fatal. Both are united in their loathing of the realist view of America not as an ever-expanding empire but as a republic with definable borders and interests rooted in her history, culture, and tradition. When a realist warns of the Hobbesian nature of the real world and advocates national interest as the foundation of this country's external affairs, they both cry in unison, "Isolationism!" "Racism!" or some other *ism*.

It is incorrect to describe Wilsonianism and neoconservatism as two "schools" of foreign policy. They are, rather, two sects of the same Western heresy that has its roots in the Renaissance and its fruits in liberal democracy. Their shared denominational genes are recognizable not in what they seek but in what they reject: polities based on national and cultural commonalities; durable elites and constitutions; and independent economies. Both view all permanent values and institutions with unrestrained hostility. Both exalt state power and reject any political tradition based on the desirability of limited government at home and nonintervention in foreign affairs. Both claim to favor the "market" but advocate a kind of state capitalism managed by the transnational apparatus of global financial and regulatory institutions. Their shared core belief—that society should be managed by the state in both its political and its economic life—is equally at odds with the tenets of the liberal left and those of the traditional right. Far from being "patriotic" in any conventional sense, they both reject the real, historic America in favor of a propositional construct devoid of all organic bonds and collective memories.

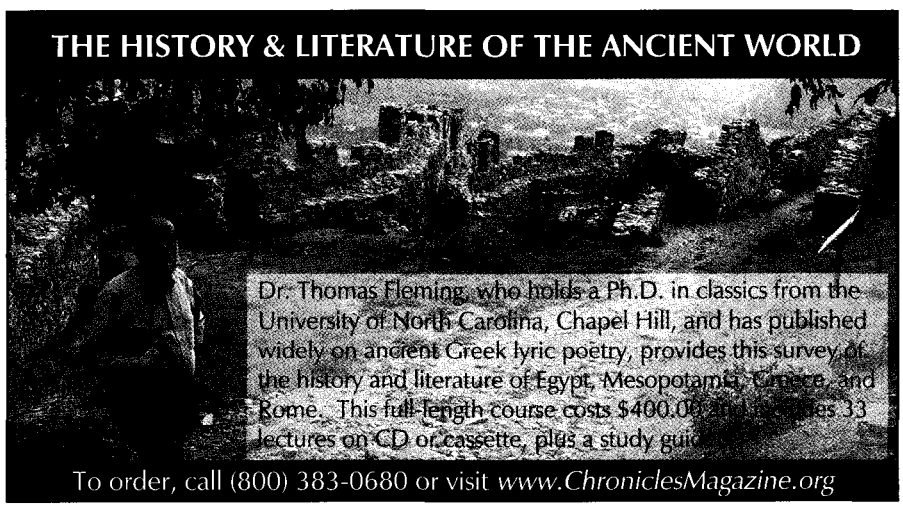
The two sects' deep-seated distaste for the traditional societies, regimes, and religion of the European continent was manifested in President Clinton's war against the Serbs in 1999 and in their unanimous support for Kosovo's independence today. For the same reason, they share a visceral Russophobia, a soft spot for Chechen jihadists, and a commitment to NATO expansion. Both Wilsonians and neoconservatives are united in opposing democracy in postcommunist Eastern Europe, lest it produce governments that will base the recovery of their ravaged societies on the revival of the family, sovereign nationhood, and the Christian Faith. Inevitably, they have joined forces in creating and funding political parties and NGOs east of the Trieste-Stettin Line that promote the entire spectrum of postmodern *isms* that have atomized America and the rest of the West for the past four decades. From Bratislava to Bucharest to Belgrade, both present the embrace of deviancy, perversion, and morbidity as the litmus test of an aspirant's "Western" clubbability. Ultimately, both sects share the Straussian dictum that the perpetual manipulation of *hoi polloi* by those in power is necessary because they need to be told what is good for them.

The essential similarity of Wilsonians and neoconservatives is based on their common ideological premises and cultural preferences. The inability of most patriotic, traditionalist Middle Americans to recognize that similarity and its implications is a problem. They have no difficulty in recognizing the weirdness or evil of, say, Hillary Clinton, but they would be hard-pressed to detect identical traits in an equally radical sectarian who has morphed into a self-styled "conservative" of the *Weekly Standard* variety. As Brian Mitchell notes in the conclusion to his book *Eight Ways to Run the Country*, the obvious disharmony between the genuine conservatism of ancient ideals—whether Anglo-American or orthodox Christian—and the ruthlessly new ideology of "democratic capitalism" embodied in Michael Ledeen's Creative Destructionism is lost on the average "Red" American who votes Republican and watches FOX News:

> It remains to be seen how far capitalism will carry us before social conservatives awake to its dangers. When free men are allowed to amass great fortunes from global rackets in gambling, pornography, prostitution, narcotics, weaponry, and usury, the permanent things can only expect short shrift. Ultimately, such unrestrained capitalism is on the side of our enslavers. In a thoroughly capitalist world, men will buy and sell each other. Only a power independent of the free market can save us from the slave market.

Historically, Mitchell notes, only two institutions have been up to the task: the institutions of nondemocratic governments that guard against accumulation of wealth outside government control, and a unified Christian Church whose wealth and power are committed to nonmarket purposes. "Democracy alone is no match for the market," Mitchell concludes, "for democracy is itself a market, selling power to the highest bidder." Indeed, democracy in America is a corrupt "democratic process" run by an elite class that conspires both to make secondary issues important and to treat important issues as either irrelevant or illegitimate: One party may be in; another, out; but the regime is in power permanently.

The global power of the Wilsonian-neoconservative regime is unlikely to be broken incrementally by an America gradually coming to her senses. It will indeed be broken, but the price will be paid in Middle American blood and treasure. We cannot know when and how this will happen—but happen, it will. We cannot know what will be the theme of after-dinner discussions a hundred years hence, but we do know it will not be the global grandeur of the liberal-democratic-capitalist Pax Americana. C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CRIME

"Family Values": Illegal Aliens and Their Sex Crimes

by R. Cort Kirkwood

Whatever President Bush says about the "family values" of the growing horde of illegal Mexican immigrants, chilling newspaper accounts and cold data tell a different tale.

On April 29, 2005, an illegal alien from Guatemala, Ronald Douglas Herrera Castellanos, was power washing a deck at the Nagle home in New City, New York. In her bedroom, Mary Nagle, 42, a wife and mother of two children, readied herself for a tennis match. Later, a prosecutor said, what police found in the bedroom was reminiscent of the Manson murders, "a scene out of a horror movie." Herrera slashed Nagle with a green-handled box cutter, cutting off a piece of her earlobe, and nearly amputated a finger as she tried to defend herself. Hanks of hair lay about the blood-spattered scene. Herrera raped Nagle for 30 minutes, beat her "almost beyond recognition," one newspaper reported, and mutilated her genitals. Then, he changed into her husband's clothes and, using her cell phone, called 51 of her friends and relatives to threaten them or describe the deeds in pornographic detail.

Mary Nagle was just one victim of illegal-alien criminals that year. Two others were children. In December, in Fontana, California, an illegal alien kidnapped, raped, and sodomized a four-year-old girl, then tossed her over a six-foot wall. The *Press-Enterprise* of Riverside reported that, in addition to suffering three facial fractures, "the child required surgery to repair damage caused by the rape and sodomy." In Gainsville, Florida, in June that year, an illegal alien, whose *nom de crime* is "Revolver," raped and strangled four-year-old Esmerelda Nava.

Illegal aliens are also partial to gang rape, as an 18-year-old woman in Immokalee, Florida, found out in October 2005. Fourteen illegal aliens dragged her from her home into a residence across the street. They choked her until she passed out, then awakened her by pouring alcohol into her mouth. After the feral gang raped her, they pushed her out the door. They arrogantly stayed at the scene until police arrived to arrest them.

In 2002, a gang of illegals raped and sexually tortured a woman for three hours near Shea Stadium in New York before police interrupted the attack. They ravaged her like a "pack of wild wolves," she wrote in a letter to New York Supreme Court Justice Randall Eng.

And in Klamath Falls, Oregon, in August 2002, an illegal immigrant, Maximiliano C. Esparza, attacked two nuns as they were walking along a bike path, praying the rosary. Head-butting one of them, he used their rosaries to choke them while he raped them. When he was finished killing Sr. Helen Chaska, the sacramental was embedded in her neck. Liquored up at a strip bar before the crime, Esparza, like many illegals, had a record of violent crime and had been deported. Just months before Esparza raped and murdered Sister Helen, the Border Control had detained and released him.

In town after town, city after city, state after state, these are the sorts of crimes that illegal aliens commit on a regular basis, along with drunk driving, hit-and-run homicide, robbery, and murder. Yet, even as local newspapers and television stations file near-daily reports, the national news media ignore the trend.

Deborah Schurman-Kauflin of the Violent Crimes Institute conducted a year-long study of 1,500 illegals who committed sex crimes between 1999 and 2006. Assuming an illegal population of 12 million, and using immigration and prison records, she calculated that two percent of apprehended illegal aliens are sex criminals, meaning some 240,000 illegal-alien sex criminals are now in the United States. And "this translates to 93 sex offenders and 12 serial sexual offenders coming across U.S. borders illegally per day." The 1,500 criminals attacked 5,999 people, about four victims each. If 240,000 illegal-alien sex criminals are here, with four victims each, Kauflin calculates 960,000 victims over the seven years studied. In short, thanks to our government's failure to enforce immigration laws, illegal-alien sex fiends likely victimized one million people between 1999 and 2006.

Thirty-five percent of the criminals were child molesters, 24 percent were rapists, and 41 percent were sex and serial murderers. Eighty-one percent were on booze or dope when they committed their crimes. And, in 22 percent of the sex crimes, illegal aliens attacked the physically and mentally disabled.

More maddening is that almost all these crimes were preventable, had the federal government done its constitutional duty. Sixty-three percent of the illegal-alien sex fiends Kauflin studied were deported for another offense, and "there was an average of 3 years of committing crimes such as DUI, assaults, or drug related offenses prior to being apprehended for a sexual offense." In short, elected federal officials, including Chief Executive George W. Bush, are responsible for this crime wave.

If those numbers aren't disturbing enough, consider this: Since its "Operation Predator" began in 2003, the federal Immigration and Customs Enforcement bureau has arrested more than 9,300 child molesters nationwide. In March 2005, for instance, ICE collared 21 illegal-alien sex criminals in White Plains, New York. One was an illegal-alien Mexican who raped a 14-year-old girl. Another Mexican stalked a 13-year-old, and a Guatemalan illegal attempted to rape a 7-year-old. About 85 percent of the nationwide total, ICE reported, were "foreign national sex offenders whose crimes make them removable from the United States. To date, more than 5,000 of these predators have been deported." This is hardly a victory in the war against sex crimes. If Kauflin's data are correct, the government has at least 235,000 to go, most of them Mexicans.

Among the deportees was Domingo Penaloza-Cabrera, a Mexican who jumped the border in 1999. In 2001, this *caballero* offered to drive a woman home from a Minneapolis night club. Instead, he took her to a party she did not want to attend, then drove her to the Mississippi River and raped her. "Penaloza-Cabrera then grabbed a metal pipe," ICE reported,

> dragged the woman from his vehicle to the river and repeatedly struck her in the head with the

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> pipe, yelling, "I want to kill you. You are going to die." Penaloza-Cabrera then held the woman's head under water four times. The fourth time, the woman went limp, feigning death. Penaloza-Cabrera left her in the river and fled . . .

Amazingly, the victim survived, but this tale again suggests the magnitude of the near-crisis with which state and local authorities, not to mention American citizens, are contending. "Between Oct. 1, 2005 and March 31, 2006," the agency said in its release on Penaloza-Cabrera, "ICE deported 1,423 illegal aliens from the five-state area" of Minnesota, the Dakotas, Nebraska, and Iowa.

> Of that number, 627 had criminal convictions in addition to being immigration law violators. During fiscal year 2005, ICE deported 3,060 illegal aliens from the same geographic area, 1,368 of them with criminal convictions.

And, compounding the insult to U.S. citizens, many illegal aliens are registered sex offenders, meaning the authorities have released them, instead of deporting them, when they finished their prison time.

The obvious question is why so many illegal aliens, Mexicans in particular, are disposed to commit sex crimes. The problem isn't just miscreant Mexicans; it is Mexico's twisted, macho-misogynist culture of drinking and rape.

Recall Kauflin's report that more than 80 percent of the sex offenders were drunk or high. Then, add federal data and several investigative reports that show that the number of DUI arrests among Hispanics is disproportionate to their numbers in the population—a fact that Mothers Against Drunk Driving, police, and Hispanic observers themselves attribute, not surprisingly, to Mexican and Latino cultural attitudes. Many Hispanic men are problem drinkers.

Mary Jordan, a reporter for the *Washington Post*, covered the topic of rape and Old Mexico in a Pulitzer Prize-winning story published in 2002, "In Mexico, an Unpunished Crime: Rape Victims Face Widespread Cultural Bias in Pursuit of Justice." Mexico abides a quaint little cultural practice called *rapto*—kidnapping a woman or girl to rape her. In Mexico, Jordan reported, stealing a cow is more serious than raping a woman. Even Mexican police gang-rape women and get away with it; a 16-year-old girl committed suicide after one such case. "In 90 percent of the cases of rape," the girl's mother said, "the Mexican police blame the women. In the few cases where they know the man is guilty, they let him 'fix' it with money."

"A review of criminal laws in all 31 Mexican states," Jordan reported,

> showed that many states require that if a 12-year-old girl wants to accuse an adult man of statutory rape, she must first prove she is "chaste and pure." Nineteen of the states require that statutory rape charges be dropped if the rapist agrees to marry his victim.

In short, raping a 12-year-old south of the border is just fine, as long as you "love" her, because "laws in most Mexican states define *rapto* as a case where a man kidnaps a woman not for ransom, but with the intent of marrying her or to satisfy his 'erotic sexual desire.'" When Jordan asked some small-town "elders" in the Mexican state of Guerrero about *rapto*, they feigned ignorance, then laughed when she explained it to them. "A rapist would probably get a few hours in the local jail, or he might have to pay the victim's family a $10 or $20 fine," they told Jordan. But "all would be forgotten if he and the victim got married." One Mexican legislator called it "romantic."

Many of his brothers who have crossed the border share this opinion. And too few in the open-borders lobby, not least their Gran Patrón at La Casa Blanca, are willing to admit it. That would amount to "racial profiling," you see. We used to call it good police work (and, technically, it's cultural profiling), but, whatever you call it, importing millions of illegal aliens means importing their cultural practices, habits, and attitudes, which, for women and children across the United States, has meant not only the savage embrace of an illegal alien, or a gang of them, but the searing pain of a metal pipe or the murderous slash of a box-cutter.

Yet these are the people and culture our President wants to import because of their "family values." One wonders what Mary Nagle would think of Herrera's "family values."

Too bad we can't ask her.

R. Cort Kirkwood is the author of Real Men: Ten Courageous Americans to Know and Admire *(Cumberland House).*

LETTERS

A Great Tradition Renewed

by Derek Turner

Literary feuds, like ideas, have consequences. After Sir Walter Scott read a disparaging review of his *Marmion* in the *Edinburgh Review*, the bard of the Borders decided that what British life needed above all was a journal that would give his works more respectful treatment and would provide a powerful antidote to the Whiggish and increasingly influential *Edinburgh Review*. The rest is literary and political history.

The *Quarterly Review* rapidly joined its great rival as one of the two most important British journals of the 19th century. With the patronage of Scott, Robert Southey, and George Canning, under the guidance of remarkable editors, and published by the respected publisher John Murray II, it soon attracted the support of many members of the Tory establishment and numbered prime ministers, senior clergy, and eminent litterateurs among its contributors. Those who wanted to inform and shape public opinion wrote for the *Quarterly Review*; those who wanted to understand public opinion had to read it.

The *Quarterly Review*'s first editor was William Gifford. Gifford was the son of a Derbyshire glazier who went briefly to sea and later served as apprentice to a cobbler. But he was fortunate enough to be talent-spotted by a local surgeon, William Cookesley, who paid for him to be released from his apprenticeship and to go to Oxford, whence he was graduated as a bachelor of arts in 1782. Gifford soon made a name for himself as a satirist, attacking Robert Merry's Della Cruscan poets as radicals and sentimentalists in a paraphrastic poem called "The Baviad." In 1797, he became editor of George Canning's short-lived but effective QR precursor, the *Anti-Jacobin*, until it folded the following year. In 1800, he had a notorious encounter in Piccadilly with political opponent John Wolcot, who had assailed him in a work called *A Cut at a Cobbler*. Upon meeting, Wolcot attempted to horsewhip Gifford—only for the smaller Gifford to wrest Wolcot's stick from him and to thrash him until he ran away.

Equally creditably, if more pacifically,

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in 1802, Gifford's translation of Juvenal (still in print today) was published; he also prepared notable editions of the works of Philip Massinger and Ben Jonson. Gifford died in 1827 and was succeeded by Sir J.T. Coleridge (nephew of the poet) and Scott's biographer (and son-in-law) John Gibson Lockhart.

During his incumbency, Gifford recruited the Irish Tory politician and polemicist John Wilson Croker (supposedly the man who coined the term *Conservatives* in 1830) as a regular contributor. Croker, who was secretary to the admiralty for a remarkable 20 years and apparently an admirable public servant, was one of the QR's liveliest and least chivalrous reviewers. His archenemy, Lord Macaulay, once said that Croker was "a man who would go a hundred miles through snow and sleet on top of a coach to search a parish register and prove a man illegitimate or a woman older than she says she is."

In some 270 QR articles, Croker attacked (among others) Macaulay, Thackeray, Disraeli, Dumas, Rousseau, Hugo, Balzac, Sands, and, most famously, John Keats. Croker was clearly (and understandably) irritated by such lines as "A thing of beauty is a joy forever" and images such as:

> Leading the way, young damsels
> danced along,
> Bearing the burden of a shepherd
> song;
> Each having a white wicker over
> brimm'd
> With April's tender younglings;
> next, well trimm'd
> A crowd of shepherds with as sun-
> burnt looks
> As may be read of in Arcadian books.

Accordingly, he savaged *Endymion* mercilessly and hilariously. (Lockhart had also tossed and gored Keats in *Blackwood's Magazine*.) Croker was handed a gift by Keats' own faux-humble prefatory remarks that "The two first books, and indeed the two last, I feel sensible are not of such completion as to warrant their passing the press."

To this Uriah Heep-ish cant, Croker inevitably added:

> Thus 'the two first books' are,
> even in his own judgment, unfit
> to appear, and 'the two last' are, it
> seems, in the same condition—
> and as two and two make four,
> and as that is the whole number of
> books, we have a clear and, we believe, a very just estimate of the entire work.

Croker went on in enjoyably bitchy form,

> It is not that Mr Keats, (if that be his real name, for we almost doubt that any man in his senses would put his real name to such a rhapsody,) it is not, we say, that the author has not powers of language, rays of fancy, and gleams of genius—he has all these; but he is unhappily a disciple of the new school of what has been somewhere called Cockney poetry; which may be defined to consist of the most incongruous ideas in the most uncouth language. . . . We should have abstained from inflicting upon him any of the tortures of the 'farce hell' of criticism, which terrify his imagination, if he had not begged to be spared in order that he might write more; if we had not observed in him a certain degree of talent which deserves to be put in the right way, or which, at least, ought to be warned of the wrong; and if, finally, he had not told us that he is of an age and temper which imperiously require mental discipline.

When Keats died in 1821, Shelley and Byron said that Croker was partly responsible, claiming that Keats had been "snuffed out by an article"—although Croker's review had appeared a full three years earlier. In any case, such fine feelings did not stop Byron from allowing John Murray to publish his books.

QR reviews were by no means all carping. Apart from the positive reviews of his works that he had longed for, Scott himself contributed a positive review of a new book called *Emma*, written by a first-time writer from a Hampshire rectory—so launching Jane Austen onto a still grateful world.

Apart from reviews covering everything from the latest translations of the classics to economic texts and travelogues, the QR featured agenda-changing political comment. Gifford was a Canningite Tory who advocated political gradualism in many areas—opposing political reform but supporting Catholic emancipation, the gradual elimination of slavery, and the liberalizing of trade. Such a pragmatic philosophy was likely to appeal to one of the QR's most distinguished writers, three-times prime minister Lord Salisbury.

Salisbury wrote 33 lengthy articles between 1850 and 1883, on topics ranging from America, the Conservative Party, working-class education, the monarchy, philhellenism, Poland, socialism, democracy, and the perils of "disintegration," stopping only when his anonymity was finally compromised.

Some of these articles have become classics of their kind, such as his withering 1861 attack on democracy: "It is only in the wreck of all ideals, and the collapse of all fantastic hopes, that sober cynical Truth can make her prosaic accents heard." In his 40-page essay on "Disintegration" (1883, his last article) can be detected the same exasperation with Irish politics that has marked more recent Conservative policy:

> Possession of Ireland is our peculiar punishment, our unique affliction, among the family of nations. What crime have we committed, with what particular vice is our national character chargeable, that this chastisement should have befallen us?

Other writers included William Gladstone (while he was a Conservative MP), Matthew Arnold, John Ruskin, Lord Acton, conversationalist and cultural arbiter Samuel Rogers (whose 1792 *The Pleasure of Memory* is often regarded as the last important example of the 18th century's "Augustan" poetic tone), Sir John Barrow (founder of the Royal Geographical Society and author of Arctic travelogues), French conservative François Guizot, and (once) Ugo Foscolo of *Jacopo Ortis* fame—when he wasn't detained at His Majesty's Pleasure in debtors' prison.

So the QR continued, all the way up until 1967—a highly respected but increasingly isolated voice of erudite (often very High) Toryism in a country and world more and more characterized by ultraleft thinking. Suddenly, it ceased publication, for reasons I have been unable to discover—although one can guess that it had probably been losing readers for some years. One can see why a journal such as the QR might have been considered anachronistic in the year of *Sergeant Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band* and *A Whiter Shade of Pale*.

Yet this is not just a bittersweet reminder of a great, lost past, when at least some on the right used to be literary titans.

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Rather, it is notification that, 40 years since that ill-omened Summer of Love, the *Quarterly Review* is to be revived.

We who are behind this scheme (the chairman of the editorial board is the former Conservative member of parliament and renowned Eurosceptic, Sir Richard Body) hope that, in time, it might become as important to the 21st century as its illustrious predecessor was to the 19th.

We believe—not too naively, we hope—that, even in these days of tabloid newspapers and dumbed-down culture, there still exists a sizable constituency of British people who are interested in serious matters and high culture, and who care about the state of the world. These are not necessarily "conservatives" or "right-wingers" but include many people who would never think of themselves in those terms, yet are similarly concerned about the looming environmental disaster; social anomie and alienation; cultural decay; the challenges posed by globalization, mass immigration, and the real or potential "clash of civilizations."

The new journal will, we hope, borrow ideas and information from across the political spectrum, and from around the world, and try to propound genuine answers to serious problems, from abortion to Zimbabwe. It will feature in-depth articles on topical subjects, as well as summaries and reviews of what we see as the most important books of the moment—intermingled with literature, philosophy, arts criticism, and news of relevant events, plus lively columns by the radically different, but equally inimitable, Taki and the Rev. John Papworth.

The aim is to bring together the wisdom of traditional conservatism with the insights of ecologists, localists, small-scale economists, and scientists—all of whose worldviews are, or could be, complementary. We want to formulate a philosophy that is purged of the callowness and callousness of some on the right, and the schmaltzy sentimentality and envy of some on the left.

The QR will give respectful treatment to both tradition and innovation, and be open to non-Western ideas and traditions—although, when necessary, it will also be an unabashed defender of the combined classical, Christian, and humanist heritage of the West.

There will always be a presumption in favor of the human-scale and personal over the large-scale and abstract—whether economics, political systems, or works of art. There will always be a sympathetic interest shown in patriotism, regionalism, and localism. There will always be a respect for what is true—or seems to be true—over what is politically expedient. Furthermore, we hope all the writing in the QR will possess a certain flamboyance as well as classical elegance—and so be worthy of its noble forerunner.

In our small way, we want to help bring about a world that is happier and greener and more civilized—a world where proud villages, towns, counties, provinces, countries, and confederations can coexist peaceably; a world where individuals can be simultaneously self-reliant and socially interdependent; a world that is free and prosperous, yet stable and quietly idealistic.

These are, perhaps, elevated aims, yet we venture to hope that they are not unrealistic. There is a real hunger for answers and a real desire for change in our world of deceit, wishful thinking, and abysmal leadership—a need that just might be partly met by a journal conscious of a proud past yet looking hopefully toward a future that we can and must change.

Derek Turner is the editor of the Quarterly Review. *To request a free sample copy, please visit* www.quarterly-review.org.

"What, they lived once thus at Venice where the merchants are the kings, Where St. Mark's is, where the Doges used to wed the sea with rings?

The Rockford Institute and *Chronicles* announce an international convivium:

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Robert Browning is only one of a long list of great writers—from Shakespeare, Wordsworth, and Byron to Henry James, Thomas Mann, and Ernest Hemingway—who fell in love with Venice. Who wouldn't go to Venice, if he had a chance to go in the company of congenial souls and to learn something about the amazing republic that challenged kingdoms and empires (while making a profit) and stood in the path of the Ottoman Turk? William McNeill called Venice "the hinge of Europe" because it was Venice, and before Venice, Ravenna, that connected Europe with the vital culture of the Byzantine Empire, a culture manifested in the domes and spires of San Marco and Ravenna's exquisite mosaics (Italy's finest).

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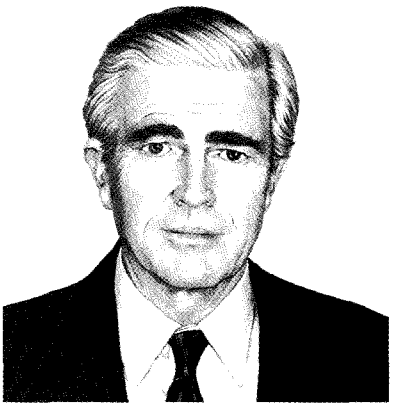
by George McCartney

The Squirm Index



Little Miss Sunshine

Produced by Big Beach Films
Directed by Jonathan Dayton and Valerie Faris
Screenplay by Michael Arndt
Distributed by Fox Searchlight Pictures

Little Children

Produced and distributed by New Line Cinema
Directed by Todd Field
Screenplay by Tom Perrotta and Todd Field

Allow me to introduce the Squirm Index. For a while now, I have been looking for an alternative to the overly elastic rating system used by the Motion Picture Association of America, which has, for 39 years, been trying to quantify what constitutes acceptable fare for our viewing entertainment. Can we abide one nipple for a PG-13? Two for an R? How many *f*-words add up to an NC-17? Does decapitation rate a PG or PG-13 if there's no accompanying geyser of blood? Slippery questions all, but I think the Squirm Index may yield answers. Here's how it works: Whether a film is acceptable will henceforth be determined by how likely it is to make you squirm should you watch it with a family member by your side. How comfortable would you be watching, say, *Kinsey* with your parents? With your teenagers? If you're a guy, do you want to take your sister to *Y Tu Mamá También*? And what about the *American Pie* series? Does anyone want to see any of its installments with any other mortal? Or, for that matter, alone?

In short, if a film is likely to make you squirm while watching it with your close relations, it's fair to say it has stepped out of bounds.

Two recent films illustrate my case. Each is a "small, independent" film that has won kudos from most mainstream reviewers and is now, having been nominated for an Academy Award or two, enjoying an extended run. *Little Miss Sunshine* and *Little Children* are both well made, strongly acted, and adroitly filmed works. Yet each sets off the Squirm Alarm.

Let's start with *Little Miss Sunshine*. This Sundance winner has been hailed as a witty, satiric comedy with enough poignant uplift to melt the stoniest heart. Watching it, however, I felt my own pump freeze at its calculating tastelessness. Husband-and-wife filmmakers Jonathan Dayton and Valerie Faris, along with their screenwriter, Michael Arndt, seem to think crude vulgarity is the same thing as heartwarming humor.

The film starts out skewering some of the stranger fixations of our popular culture. We meet a deeply weird and fractious family whose members are variously caught up with self-empowerment programs, academic careerism, new-age childrearing, and tiny-tot beauty contests. The script ingeniously crams all of their lunacy into a Volkswagen van and sends the family careering down the blue highways of the American Southwest to bring Olive, their youngest member, to a beauty pageant in San Diego. *Good premise*, I thought, as the film got under way. But things soon turned unforgivably sour. As the grandfather of this brood, Alan Arkin plays Frank Hoover, a heroin-sniffing, sex-crazed geezer who takes advantage of the road trip to advise his 15-year-old grandson, Dwayne (Paul Dano): "Listen to me, I got no reason to lie to you, don't make the same mistakes I made when I was young. F--k a lotta women, kid; not just one woman, a lotta women." Somehow, I couldn't find it in me to chuckle at this *outré* counsel. Instead of hugging me to its cinematic heart, I'm afraid the line threw me out of the film's fictional frame altogether. I didn't take offense at Frank, the character, who is, after all, whacked on smack and scabrously senile to boot. But I couldn't help wondering why Arkin, an esteemed actor with some clout, didn't take more ownership of his character and suggest that it was inadvisable for him to say this to his grandson, especially in the presence of his granddaughter, Little Miss Sunshine herself (played by seven-year-old actress Amy Breslin). Doesn't the protection of minors trump aesthetic license? Then again, the Squirm Factor apparently didn't bother the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences: They awarded Arkin with an Oscar for his four-letter performance.

Later, it transpires that the girl's parents have put crazy Frank in charge of choreographing the girl for her dance recital. Only in the pageant's climactic talent contest do we finally see the results. Olive is made to behave in a manner congenial to what we must suppose is her grandfather's preferred sort of woman. Her recital is a classic bump-and-grind striptease. How sweet! Of course, the hypocrites running the pageant are horrified. Not to worry: Little Olive's ecdysiast display brings the formerly fractured family together. In a touching conclusion, all the family members climb onto the stage to twist and thrust their pelvises vigorously along with Olive. Who said American filmmakers lack family values?

Little Children is another and much better satire, but it also tops out the Squirm Index. Based on Tom Perrotta's novel, the film boasts some fine performances designed to ask a question pressing on many minds: "How would Madame Bovary fare in today's American suburbia?" (I would have thought we already had our answer, given America's high incidence of Bovaryism, but perhaps those endless reports of adultery are just hype to get us to watch *Desperate Housewives*.) Sarah (Kate Winslet) is a bored young mother whose husband is more interested in internet pornography than in her, which may explain why she feels her daughter a burden and longs for some kind of "fulfillment." At the playground, she sits apart from the other young moms, the better to despise their petit bourgeois preoccupations. As they gossip about neighbors and real-estate values, she likes to imagine she's an anthropologist studying the absurd female habits of an especially backward tribe. Her contempt is confirmed when one of the women recounts an episode in her domestic sex

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life. She was so tired the night before that she fell asleep while paying the marriage debt. A clear case of *coitus somnolentus*. Confessing this to her hubby afterward, he didn't complain. Why would he? He hadn't even noticed.

What Sarah finds most rankling about her neighbors is their ridiculous reaction to the man they have dubbed the Prom King (Patrick Wilson), a good-looking hunk who brings his three-year-old son to the park daily. They are at once scandalized and intrigued to see a man not working on weekdays, and they cannot help wondering about his availability. Is he divorced? Widowed? Not that any of them would actually do anything about it if he were unattached. For his part, the very married Prom King, whose name is Brad, keeps to himself and is entirely oblivious to their girlish interest in him. Then, one of the young matrons gets an idea. She bets the haughty Sarah that she wouldn't be daring enough to get his telephone number. To put the housewives in their place, Sarah sees the bet and raises it. After chatting Brad up out of the gals' earshot, she informs him of the wager and suggests they really shock the biddies by kissing. Brad chuckles and plays along. The kiss, however, turns out to be more than either had bargained for. In subsequent meetings at the playground and the town pool, they inch not so slowly toward what seems to both an inevitable affair. When Brad drives her home during a thunderstorm with their kids in tow, she invites him into her house. While she puts the tots to bed, he finds a poetry anthology in the living room in which she has underlined the opening line of Shakespeare's Sonnet 147, "My love is a fever." That's cue enough for him. He takes her not so unaware in the laundry room where she has gone to wash the children's clothes.

As the chronicler of self-delusion, Perrotta uses the sonnet to make his point. Sarah and Brad either ignore the rest of the poem or are too smitten to understand it, for the speaker goes on to compare his passion to a disease. He is

> . . . longing still
> For that which longer nurseth the disease,
> Feeding on that which doth preserve the ill. . . .
> My thoughts and my discourse as mad men's are . . .
> For I have sworn thee fair, and thought thee bright,
> Who art as black as hell, as dark as night.

While Sarah and Brad like to think of themselves caught up in a vibrant passion bigger than both of them, the narrative makes it abundantly clear that their behavior is childishly willful and more than a little deranged. Each has fastened on extracurricular desire as a refuge from domestic problems. Sarah has married an entirely unsuitable older man on the rebound from several alliances, including a lesbian dalliance that left her confused and ashamed. She sought to escape self-doubt through marriage. Brad is a former jock who has never outgrown his youthful success on the football field. Goaded by his ambitious wife, he managed to finish law school but has failed the bar exam twice. He has become a stay-at-home dad, taking care of his son by day while his wife works to support the household. At night, he's supposed to be studying for his next bar trial—but he can't keep his mind on his books and, worse, has growing doubts about wanting to be a lawyer at all. In short, Sarah and Brad think they are falling in love when they are really seeking the all-American palliative, self-esteem, in the fever-heat generated by their adulterous embraces. Rejecting adult responsibility, they become the little children of the title.

When her book club reads *Madame Bovary*, Sarah remarks that, in college, she had been taught to think the novel an example of misogynist ideology, which depicted Emma Bovary as a helpless woman ensnared by her romantic illusions. Now, however, she thinks Emma beautiful and heroic, a rebel against the dreary compromises of adulthood. With Sarah's changing literary assessment, Perrotta reminds us that great books read their readers, and what Flaubert's novel reads in Sarah is her foolish pride. She sees what she wants to see. "I have sworn thee fair, and thought thee bright, / Who art as black as hell, as dark as night."

So far so good. Now, for the Squirm Quotient. Director Todd Field has found it necessary to show us Miss Winslet and Mr. Patrick repeatedly in sessions of fully naked congress. One wonders why. A couch clinch followed by a fade away would have done the trick quite as well. Of course, financial calculation may have been Field's motive—this and Miss Winslet's well-known penchant for flashing her breasts. Sex, especially explicit sex, sells. But how much does it sell? There's good evidence that it also keeps people away. I know many who rarely go to the movies, not wanting to be assaulted by bare bods and raw gore. The same goes for watching films on television, with the added disincentive of not wanting to squirm alongside their loved ones. Had Field displayed a little restraint rather than a lot of skin, these people might be able to watch Perrotta's essentially moral tale and later discuss its issues with their friends and family members. The Squirm Factor, however, makes this quite unlikely. Too bad Field didn't follow Alexander Payne's lead. In translating Perrotta's earlier satire, *Election*, to the screen, Payne managed to deal with its deluded adulterers without bringing their shenanigans into the street and scaring the horses.

All in all, there's something to be said for censorship. In the past, it exerted a pressure that was aesthetically useful. When artists in any medium meet with resistance, they must find more creative ways to express themselves. Take Billy Wilder's *Double Indemnity* (1944), in which Barbara Stanwyck and Fred MacMurray play adulterous characters who cannot keep their hands off each other. As they embrace on a divan in MacMurray's apartment, the camera pulls back slowly, and there's a cut to MacMurray narrating his story into a Dictaphone a few months later. After he explains what was on his mind as he hugged Stanwyck, the film cuts back to the earlier scene. We understand some time has elapsed, because MacMurray is now reclining at one end of the divan smoking a cigarette, while Stanwyck is at the other end applying her lipstick with the aid of her compact's mirror. Anyone over, say, 17 will instantly know what happened between the two shots. Yet no one need squirm at the information. C

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by Chilton Williamson, Jr.

Jihad on the Rio

On a morning less than a week before the kickoff to Bro. Billy Joe's Crusade for Souls, AveMaría, after she'd dropped Contracepción off at the mosque, was in the middle of a U-turn in the street when a car rounded the corner ahead on two wheels, heading directly for the Subaru. As there was nothing to do but sound the horn, AveMaría did so, striking the top of the steering column with the side of her right hand, in which she held an open can of Sprite. The jet of carbonated liquid blinded her momentarily, so she never saw the car leap the curb and run for a distance along the strip of sidewalk. By the time her sight cleared, the vehicle had regained and crossed the street and was pulling into the parking lot beside the mosque. Indignant, AveMaría put the Subaru in reverse and backed it as fast as she dared into the road with the intention of giving the driver a piece of her mind through the window.

The car, an ancient Dodge Dart that was the sun-faded color of a spoiled tomato, looked familiar. (AveMaría was not given to noticing automobiles especially, unless it was something she thought she'd like to own.) So did the young man with dark, curly hair and wearing a white T-shirt and tan cargo pants climbing out on the driver's side. Why, she thought—*it's Abdul Agha!* But who was the turbaned man emerging from the passenger door wearing dark glasses and carrying a stick? Though she was too far away for a good look at his face, something about the *typo* made AveMaría's skin crawl. Had not Héctor warned that every mosque was a snake pit of terrorists? Surely, this man looked the part. On second thought, AveMaría put the Subaru in DRIVE and drew away from the mosque. She'd find a way to get the information she wanted out of Abdul when he delivered Contracepción home that afternoon.

But Abdul Agha did not bring Contracepción that day. Instead, the girl called around two o'clock to request that her mother come for her at three. Abdul, she explained, had to drive his father somewhere. Feeling slightly peeved—besides having planned an afternoon's uninterrupted work at the church helping prepare for the Crusade, she'd been looking forward to having her curiosity regarding the spectacled man gratified—AveMaría met her daughter as requested at the mosque, where nothing much seemed to be happening except for an after-school religious class, and neither Abdul nor his former passenger was about.

AveMaría, having prepared her strategy in advance, waited until they'd driven a few blocks and were already ascending the access ramp to I-25 before remarking, in a jesting tone: "You know, Abdul almost ran smack into me after I dropped you at the mosque this morning. He must have been going at least thirty miles an hour around that corner—like a *maníaco*! If Gallegos, the cop, were to catch him doing such a thing, he'd have him deported all the way back to Afghanistan. I hope he doesn't drive that way when he's with you, *mia vida*! Did he take driver's ed in Kabul, do you know?"

"*Mamá*, he must have been hurrying! His *papá* had an important meeting with a guy came all the way from Pakiland to see him. He had to get him to the mosque on time!"

A sickly light, the color of a dying sun, rose at the back of AveMaría's mind. "Does his father wear glasses and carry a cane?"

"*¡Claro*—he is blind! That's why poor Abdul has to drive him everywhere."

So that was the answer, AveMaría thought to herself. Aloud, she added, "He drives his dad to the mosque every morning, then. Why doesn't he take you along, too, *querido*?"

"*O Mamá*, don't be silly. His father can't ever know about me! Abdul said he'd have, like, a *heart attackt* if he knew his son was going with a *Nasrani*—a *kafir*."

"What's a *Nasrany Café*?"

"It means *Christian, infidel*, in Arabic. Abdul explained it to me."

AveMaría was shocked at first, then angered. "An infidel? Who's an infidel? Me, or that blind towelhead in glasses? Is your father, then, an infidel too, *picarona*?"

"*Mamá*, don't get excited! It's like they keep telling us in school, all religions are really the same."

AveMaría saw clearly that it was not just Islamists who stood to benefit from Bro. Billy Joe's Crusade for Souls, but her own family as well. (What was the good of Sunday school, she asked herself, when the public-education system spent five days a week undoing the lessons that nice Mrs. Bradford taught the kids?) She said as much to her husband that evening after supper, when Contracepción had retired to her room for what AveMaría presumed was her good-night talk with Abdul.

"Won't it be wonderful," she added, "to see Abdul and Contracep feeling Our Lord's breath on their faces and receiving the Spirit from Him, hand in hand together?"

But Héctor only grunted as he took another Corona from the fridge on his way back to the den, where he'd taken to isolating himself of late. He was drinking more than was usual for him, AveMaría had noted in some consternation. Solitary drinking was unhealthy, she'd read, but the alternative for Héctor was the Taberno Aztlán where Jesús "Eddie" Juárez hung out every night. More and more, AveMaría was coming to suspect Jesús of being a bad—or, anyway, unwholesome—influence.

The great problem AveMaría foresaw lay in enticing Abdul Agha into the revival meeting before he could recognize it as a Christian gathering. Fortunately, the Crusade was to be held in Bill Bradford's large equipment shed south of town, a decision made by Bro. Billy Joe, who feared the shabby and decrepit-looking church roof might be off-putting to potential converts. And the organizing committee had scheduled an indoor barbecue before each meeting, which would give the first hour or so the atmosphere of the secular picnic Abdul would be expecting, rather than that of a religious gathering. Even so, AveMaría felt, it was going to be a touch-and-go sit-

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uation, with much dependent on Contracepción playing her part to the hilt. Having impressed upon the girl the magnitude of the stakes involved, she felt fairly confident of her daughter's success in pulling the thing off. Still, you never knew. The entire business was very much a calculated risk.

At last, the great night arrived. Abdul, having arranged for his best friend Zamari to stand in for him at his job with the falafel shop on Sosima Pidaloa, left for "work" in his Dodge, as usual. He collected Contracepción at the Villa residence, and the two proceeded directly south on Route 314 to Bradford's machine shed, where AveMaría awaited them while Héctor sweated over a grill on which sausages browned. AveMaría, who'd been keeping her eye on the door, was impressed once again by what a fine-looking couple her daughter and the young Afghan made. She bustled over and, taking the boy's arm, led the pair directly toward her husband and the sausages, which were already producing an enticing odor. In the past, AveMaría had been conscious of some reservations regarding the Assemblies of God's teachings on the matter of alcohol. Tonight, its teetotalist theology seemed nothing short of a godsend—no beer kegs and makeshift bars standing around.

"Try one of these pork sausages," she urged Abdul. "They're almost as good as the ones we used to get in Mexico when I was a girl!" To her surprise, the boy preferred shish kebob prepared with mutton from one of the tough old sheep Bartholome Naranjo raised on his ranch along the Rio Puerco.

AveMaría kept a fond eye on the loving twosome as they strolled through the crowd, a surprising number of whom, she saw, were young people, all of them wholesome and many of them—the girls especially—good looking. Observing her daughter's progress around the shed, she began to suspect herself of having underestimated Contracep's popularity as one young woman after another approached the girl in a friendly, giggling, and generally ingratiating manner. Then Bro. Billy Joe ascended the platform, and everyone took a seat, Contracepción and Abdul toward the back of the building, AveMaría and Héctor up front. AveMaría held her breath in suspense as the preacher lifted his arms toward Heaven and began to pray: "O Father God-duh, have mercy on us miserable sinners as we gather here together—teetering on the smoky brink of Hell—in Your Holy Name!" Though she had to admit Billy Joe conducted a moving revival that evening, her appreciation was somewhat spoiled by her concern for its possible effect on Abdul Agha, who must surely realize by now he was in a vipers' pit of *Nasrany Cafés*. However, the boy seemed cheerful enough afterward, AveMaría thought, chatting comfortably with Contracepción and a knock-out redhead of about sixteen she didn't recall having ever seen at church.

When the time came to leave, Abdul shook hands gravely with Contracepción and drove off in his car, leaving the Villas standing in the parking area outside the machine shed.

"*Mi vida*, how did it go?" AveMaría demanded anxiously of her daughter. "Was he touched by the Spirit, do you think?"

The girl shrugged. "*¿Quién sabe?* I don't think he paid much attention during the meeting, he kept muttering something about a *lockbar*. Later, when it was over and we were talking with Kathleen O'Malley, he seemed to be in, like, a better mood."

"Is she the redhead girl? I don't think I've seen her around before."

"Her and her family moved here last year from Ireland. They used to be Catholic before they joined our church. I see her at Sunday school every week."

AveMaría felt greatly relieved. "It sounds like it was a success after all—don't you agree, Panchito?" Héctor, who'd been scraping a semicircular clearing in the gravel with the side of his cowboy boot, looked glum and said nothing.

AveMaría was in a state of high anticipation the next week as she contemplated the second Crusade meeting on the following Saturday night. There were to be four meetings in all, and she had no doubt that, sooner or later, God would touch Abdul Agha's heart and bring him, weeping and staggering, up the center aisle to Christ. All that week, she kept an anxious eye on Contracepción, noting the girl's every mood and pestering her with questions regarding Abdul, from which she learned nothing of interest, save that the boy's father had inadvertently discovered his son's absence from the falafel shop the previous Saturday and that there had been hell to pay. How cruel and inhumane of these Islamists, she thought, working their children like slaves for just a little extra money on the side! Meanwhile, Abdul continued to deliver Contracep to the house in his Dodge, where, after cookies and goat's milk, he bade her formal farewell at the front gate.

That Saturday evening, the Villas again departed for the Crusade in two cars, Contracepción chauffeured by her handsome admirer and feeling like royalty. How envious Kathleen O'Malley would be when she realized that last week had not been a casual date, and that she and Abdul Agha were in a serious relationship! At the barbecue, she made a point of seeking Kathleen out and hanging possessively on Abdul's arm while the three of them chatted. Then Bro. Billy Joe clambered up to the podium, and it was time for everyone to take a seat and turn his thoughts from the heaven of pork ribs to a world of sin and the agonies of Hell.

As they had the previous week, Héctor and AveMaría sat in front while the lovebirds took seats toward the back rows of chairs. Bro. Billy Joe began once again by invoking Father God-duh and, in a short time, had the congregation warmed to a fervor that seemed to sweep through Brother Bradford's shiny new machine shed like a Pentecostal fire. Contracepción did her best to get in the mood, but, in fact, she had a care only for the turbaned hunk beside her. He had never looked handsomer, she thought, his color high beneath his dusky complexion and his eyes flashing fire. Only what, she wondered, could he possibly mean by this word *lockbar*, repeated over and over again, in fervent tones, under his breath?

The ushers with their long-handled baskets had just started to take up the collection when a disturbance sounded from outside, beyond the wide steel doors of the shed. Contracepción heard rough voices raised in a roaring chant which, she realized dimly, somehow approximated the sounds Abdul Aghar was still making beside her. "*Allahu Akbar*! *Allahu Akbar*!" There came next the sound of the doors being rolled back on their metal track, followed by the riotous noise of trampling feet and the crash of the barbecue apparatus being overturned. A horde of dusky turbaned men laying about themselves with staves and crowbars swept down upon the Crusade for Souls, high in oath and praise of the One True God.

In the melee that followed, Héctor and AveMaría, frantically seeking their daughter, came upon her at last in tears of hysteria, barely in time to see Abdul Agha, hand in hand with Kathleen O'Malley, escaping through a small side door of the shed. c

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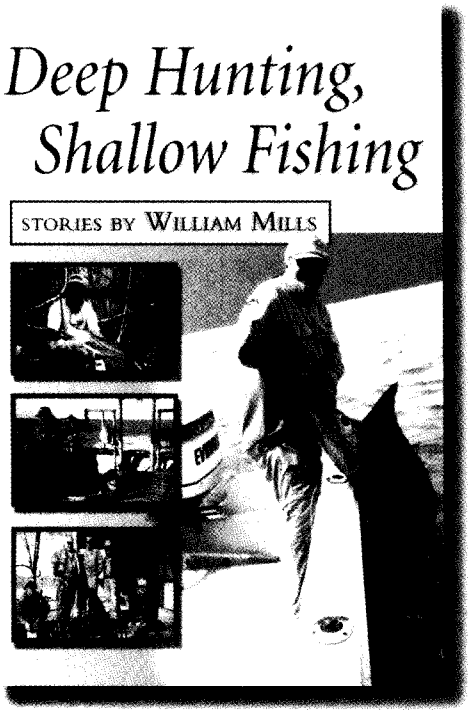

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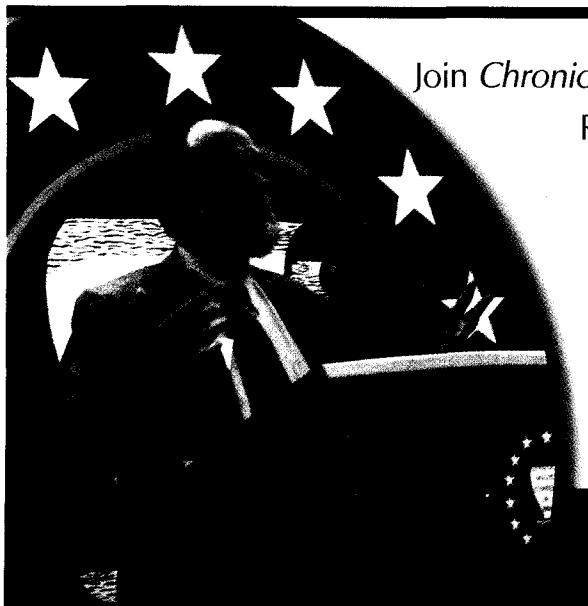

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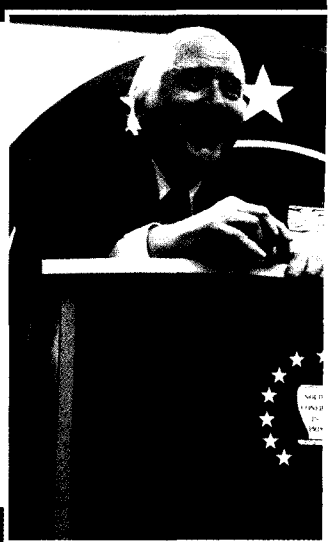

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